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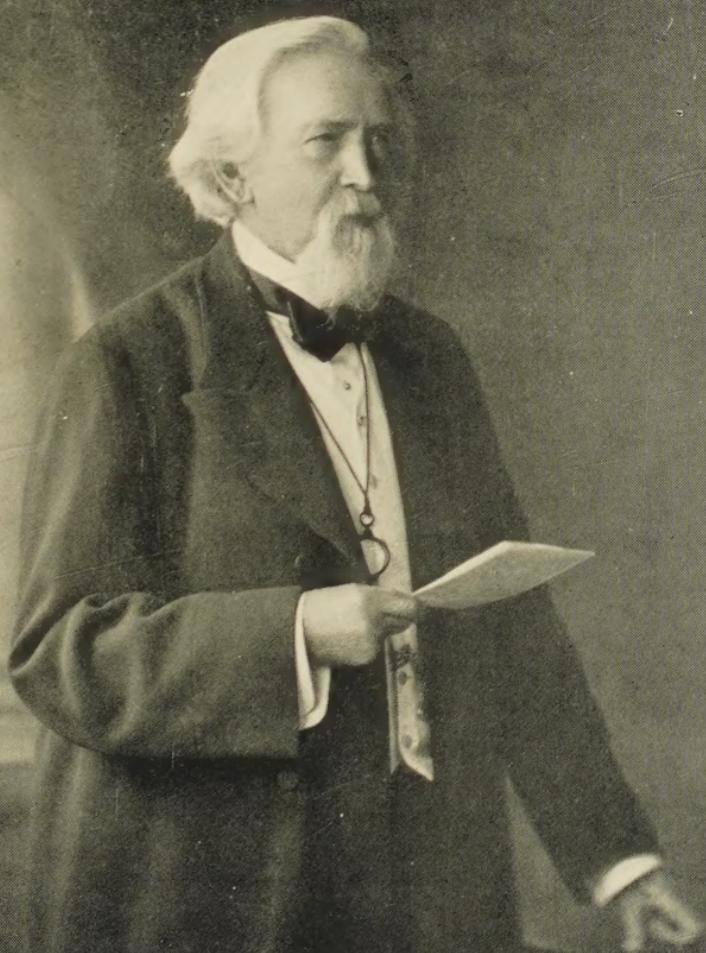
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# SIXTY YEARS

OF AN

# AGITATOR'S LIFE

BY

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF CO-OPERATION"; "SELF-HELP 100 YEARS AGO";  
"TRIAL OF THEISM," ETC.

"In order to become acquainted with an age or a people we must also know something of its second-rate and obscure men. It is in the beliefs, sentiments, and lot of unimportant individuals and unknown families, that the lot, the sentiments, and the beliefs of the country are to be found."—GUIZOT

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## CONTENTS OF PART I.

---

### CHAPTER I.

THE OLD REASON FOR WRITING A NEW BOOK	PAGE I
---------------------------------------	-----------

### CHAPTER II.

OUTLINE OF THE STORY	4
----------------------	---

### CHAPTER III.

ANCESTORS (1817)	7
------------------	---

### CHAPTER IV.

PARENTAGE (1817)	10
------------------	----

### CHAPTER V.

EARLY DAYS (1818-25)	15
----------------------	----

### CHAPTER VI.

ARTIZAN LIFE SIXTY YEARS AGO (1830)	19
-------------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER VII.

LEADERS OF THE FIRST BIRMINGHAM POLITICAL UNION (1830-3)	26
---	----

### CHAPTER VIII.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BIRMINGHAM MEN (1830-6)	33
--	----

## CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER IX.

ORATORS WHO CAME OUR WAY (1837) . . . . .	PAGE 36
---	---------

## CHAPTER X.

NATURE OF THE MIDLAND MIND (1830-6) . . . . .	42
---	----

## CHAPTER XI.

WIDER VIEWS (1837) . . . . .	45
------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XII.

BYWAY TRAGEDIES (1837) . . . . .	51
----------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XIII.

FOURTEEN NIGHTS WITH GEORGE COMBE (1838) . . . . .	60
--	----

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN SEARCH OF MONSIEUR BALLY (1838) . . . . .	66
--	----

## CHAPTER XV.

A TOUR ON FOOT (1838) . . . . .	69
---------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XVI.

PARTNERSHIP IN PROPAGANDISM (1839) . . . . .	76
--	----

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE INSURGENT AFFAIR IN THE BULL RING, BIRMINGHAM (1839) . . . . .	83
--	----

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A KNAVE WHO WANTED LESSONS IN MATHEMATICS (1840) . . . . .	87
--	----

## CHAPTER XIX.

A ROLL-CALL OF IMPRISONED FRIENDS (1840-1890) . . . . .	90
---	----

## CONTENTS.

vii

### CHAPTER XX.

ENGLISH AND IRISH AGITATORS WHO GAVE TROUBLE TO JURIES AND JUDGES (1840-1890) . . . . .	PAGE 100
---	-------------

### CHAPTER XXI.

A FURTHER CALENDAR OF FRIENDS WHOSE FATE NEEDS EXPLANATION (1840-1890) . . . . .	109
--	-----

### CHAPTER XXII.

THE FOUNDER OF SOCIAL IDEAS IN ENGLAND (1841-1858)	115
--	-----

### CHAPTER XXIII.

FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHILOSOPHER OF NEW LANARK (1841-1858) . . . . .	120
--	-----

### CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OWEN FAMILY . . . . .	124
---------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER XXV.

THE MYSTERIOUS PARCEL LEFT AT THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" OFFICE . . . . .	126
--	-----

### CHAPTER XXVI.

FIRST LECTURESHIP (1841) . . . . .	133
------------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER XXVII.

TRouble BY THE WAY (1841) . . . . .	141
-------------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

ARREST IN CHELTENHAM (1841) . . . . .	145
---------------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER XXIX.

THREE WEEKS IN PRISON FOR NOT TAKING THE OATH (1841-2) . . . . .	152
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXX.

THE TRIAL (1842) . . . . .	PAGE
----------------------------	------

157

## CHAPTER XXXI.

SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT FOR ANSWERING A QUESTION IN DEBATE (1842) . . . . .	164
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXXII.

OTHER TROUBLES IN PRISON (1842-3) . . . . .	171
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER IMPRISONMENT (1843-80). . . . .	176
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

A REMARKABLE COUNSELLOR OF PROPAGANDISTS (1843-55) . . . . .	182
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXXV.

RICHARD CARLILE THE PUBLISHER (1843) . . . . .	187
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THOMAS CARLYLE THE THINKER (1843) . . . . .	191
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

A VISIT TO THE LAST COMMUNITY (1843) . . . . .	196
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

STORY OF THE ODDFELLOWS' PRIZE LECTURES (1845-6). . . . .	204
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

A SINGULAR COINCIDENCE (1846) . . . . .	209
---	-----

## CHAPTER XL.

FRANCIS PLACE AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON (1846-60) . . . . .	213
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLI.

FIRST PLAN OF THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS AGITATION (1847-69) . . . . .	222
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLII.

THE SON OF A POET WHO BECAME A NOTABLE JOURNALIST (1850-70) . . . . .	PAGE 226
--	-------------

## CHAPTER XLIII.

CONCERNING LEIGH HUNT (1851) . . . . .	233
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLIV.

THE "LEADER" NEWSPAPER—ITS PRINCIPLES AND ITS WRITERS (1851-56) . . . . .	235
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLV.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GEORGE HENRY LEWES (1851) . . . . .	243
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLVI.

PERTURBATION IN WHITEHAVEN (1851) . . . . .	245
---	-----

## CHAPTER XLVII.

THE VICAR OF FLEET STREET (1852) . . . . .	251
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE COWPER STREET DEBATE—FIGURES ON THE PLAT- FORM (1853) . . . . .	254
--	-----

## CHAPTER XLIX.]

THE DISSENTING CHAMPION WHO DESERTED HIS SUP- PORTERS (1854-1869) . . . . .	262
--	-----

## CHAPTER L.

ADVENTURES WHERE ADVENTURES ARE NOT COUNTED POSSIBLE (1854-1884) . . . . .	265
---	-----

## CHAPTER LI.

THE TROUBLE WITH QUEEN ANNE (1854-5) . . . . .	273
--	-----

*CONTENTS.*

## CHAPTER LII.

	PAGE
THE TWELVE YEARS' AGITATION AGAINST THE 10TH OF QUEEN ANNE (1854-5) . . . . .	279

## CHAPTER LIII.

THE "HOLY WAR" OF THE UNSTAMPED PRESS (1854) .	284
--	-----

## CHAPTER LIV.

END OF THE FREE PRESS TERROR (1855) . . . . .	290
---	-----

## CHAPTER LV.

DYNAMITE ADVOCACY (1855) . . . . .	298
------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER LVI.

SAWDUST CONTROVERSIALISTS (1855) . . . . .	302
--	-----

## CHAPTER LVII.

STRANGE PROCEEDINGS OF A MAN WHO WAS AFTERWARDS BEHEADED (1855) . . . . .	306
--	-----

## PREFACE.

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DESPITE the brave homilies on virtue which abound, this is a world in which a man may be too good, and become an object of distrust by those who never lay themselves open to this suspicion. The most misgiving reader need not be afraid of the present writer. He is not too good.

In one of Ben Jonson's plays, a servant speaks of his master as "an honest gentleman, who is never at leisure to be himself; he has such tides of business." That has been the case with the Author. So much and so long occupied in vindicating the right of others to their own lives and the expression of their own reasoned opinions, he has had, until late years, no leisure to express his own.

The diversified experience of the writer has been owing to a wilfulness of sympathy with all self-helping efforts of improvement in the State, in society, and in opinion. He does not belong to those unpleasant and superior persons who have faith in themselves and no faith in others; who, as Robert Burns found in his day, "take pride in showing a proper, decent, unnoticed disregard for the poor insignificant devils, the mechanics and peasants around them"—although they are as much entitled to happiness as those who despise them are. It is not the few who make the many, but the many who make the few. Those who live without solicitude for the welfare of others do but encumber the land. When they die—

" Nor earth nor sky shall yield a single tear;  
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,  
Nor gale breathe one sigh for them—for all."

They, by their own choice, stand apart from humanity, and will have no claim to rise again in another world—having been of no use to any one in this. The Author has honour alone for those who have an *outside* nature, and this record is mainly of movements and men having this aim or this passion.

G. J. H.

### NOTES TO THIRD EDITION.

ON page 179 and elsewhere the reader has been apprised that these chapters, with few exceptions, appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, whose variety pages have become so widely entertaining under the editorship of Mr. W. E. Adams. From its readers valued corrections came, incorporated now in the text. The Author never pretended to see all things at first—he is not sure that he sees all things at last—but he sees more than he would have seen had he not been aided by the critical correspondents of that journal. Critics are the ministers of perfection, though the author may never attain to it. To others also I owe acknowledgments.

Sam Timmins (Arley) informs me that, though the newspapers of 1867 spelled Pieri's name with two, his visiting cards bore the name G. A. Pieri.

Dr. J. A. Langford (Birmingham) tells me that Geo. Edmonds, described (vol. i. p. 31) as Town Clerk, "was Clerk of the Peace. The appointment caused much commotion, and the Duke of Wellington brought the subject before the House of Lords."

Mr. James Dixon (Dorking) describes "Old Bags" (p. 109) "as the nickname of Lord Eldon." "It originated," he believes, "with the famous bags of documents which he laid on the table of the House of Lords at Queen Caroline's trial." It is said (p. 189) Mr. Lawrence, the eminent surgeon, was the operator at Carlile's dissection. Mr. Dixon says, "Not so. Mr. Grainger, who kept a Medical School at Webb Street, in the Borough, had become Lecturer on Anatomy at St. Thomas's Hospital, and on that occasion delivered an address on Carlile's body. I was at that time Demonstrator of Anatomy, and superintended the dissection after Mr. Grainger's lecture." Mr. Dixon adds, "On p. 415 it is said, 'A single blow broke Sayers's right arm.' The surgeon who had examined Sayers found that no bone had been broken, but that the muscles of Sayers's *left* arm were almost reduced to *pulp*. Afterwards Sayers fought with his right arm only. The *Annual Register* for 1860, p. 52, has the same error as to Sayers's right arm being broken."

James Charlton (Chicago), says Mr. Wilton (Hamilton, Canada), writes that one of Carlyle's nieces wishes Mr. Holyoake to know that her mother is not dead, as he says (p. 193). This error I have pleasure in correcting. Mrs. Han ning is the only surviving member of Thomas Carlyle's sisters and brothers.

# SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *THE OLD REASON FOR WRITING A NEW BOOK.*

AN author, however he may disown it, will be suspected of some egotism who writes any account of the events of his life. He can hardly presume they have interest without assuming that they have some importance. A favourite way of parrying this inference is to represent that what the author has done has been urged upon him by others. Yet a story "published by request" is never read for that reason. The author is usually regarded as having requested himself to do it, or that some personal friends, knowing that he was bent upon it, made the request to him that a colour of outside interest might be given to the act.

The persons who incited me did really put the idea into my head. Mr. William White, Door Keeper of the House of Commons, several times said to me that I ought to write some account of the social and political affairs in which I had taken part. In the midnight and early morning hours I often spent with him in his room at the House of Commons, when lingering debates were dull, we used to converse about the underground actors, who had died in our time, to whom political progress had owed something.

Thomas Allsop, the friend of Coleridge and Lamb, of O'Connor and Orsini, oft urged me to give some account of the proscribed men of thought and action with whom I had been

associated, Sam Timmins, of Birmingham ; Joseph Cowen, of Blaydon-on-Tyne ; W. H. Duignan, of Walsall ; R. B. Reed, of Winlaton, who has a journalist's instinct for incidents ; Col. R. G. Ingersoll, of Washington ; James Charlton, of Chicago ; and James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, who proposed to publish the chapters therein—an act of temerity which gave weight to his word—and many others diverse in experience and far apart, said the same thing to me. Thus I came to believe there might be interest in doing it, and have devoted the intervals of ten years to it. The reader may think the time might have been better bestowed.

In citing the names of those who incited me to write this story there is no intention of imputing to them the responsibility of the contents thereof, which they have never seen, and in which no episode that had interest in their minds, may be given here in the same connection, or told after a lapse of years, with the vividness and relevance which excited their advice. Nothing more is meant by giving their names than to show that any writer might be excused attempting a narrative which such judges had suggested.

Still I am afraid there is some meanness in citing names of those who (if I am believed) induced me to write the book, since I am exposing them—if the story proves tiresome—to that resentment which ought to fall upon the writer alone.

Though the narrative has occupied the leisure of years, the procrastination is not wholly loss. He who delays concluding his book until years of discretion have fairly set in (which arrive at 75 if they come at all) has the advantage of remoteness of view, sees in truer proportion the events he describes. Time takes out of incidents the effrontery and inflation which their novelty begets at their birth.

There is a further advantage in delay, memory grows indolent, and a narrator is less likely to weary the reader with too many recitals. As it is, I remember more things than the public or posterity (should the book reach them) will ever take interest in reading. Therefore, as I heard Serjeant Talfourd at Worcester ask a jury when his evidence was limited, “Sufficient unto the day—is the evil thereof ?”

At the head of some chapters the reader will find double dates, showing the years over which the chapter ranges. The book is

an autobiography of events, experiences, observations of men, manners, and opinions which came under my notice. The story is only incidentally an autobiography of the writer, whose life in chronological detail is not of the importance to interest the general reader. The main endeavour of the author, upon which he depends as his best justification to the reader, is that he restricts these pages to those events which have, he conceives, public instruction in them. A book of a similar character relating to movements in the earlier part of this century would have been of no mean service to him when he was young, as this peradventure may be to many now.

## CHAPTER II.

### *OUTLINE OF THE STORY.*

“WHY should I read this book?” is a question I often ask myself on opening a new one. Books multiply—time seems to be more occupied than when they were scarce, and every new book bears with it the ostensible promise of new wisdom and new experience. Each work seems to have an equal claim upon the reader. It is natural, therefore, to wish for an outline (of the kind here given) of its character which may justify him in, or deter him from, undertaking its perusal.

These chapters are the story of a Birmingham man, born in sight of St. Martin’s Church spire, when it peered above the parsonage trees in the year in which Robert Owen declared in the London Tavern that “all the religions of the world were wrong”—and Jonathan Wooler issued the first number of the *Black Dwarf*, and St. Jean Godin, founder of the famous *Familistère* of Guise, was born, so that the writer’s days began when social and political ideas were in the air. Early familiar with economy and industry, a little good fortune seemed great, and activity became a habit which had pleasure in it, and was at once dependence and independence—dependence, because mechanical skill was a personal resource ; independence, because the power of working renders any one free of obligation. Trained in Christianity, he came personally to know that sincerity was not the same thing as truth, and never forgot in after-life that error might be honest. Knowledge without books was his chief attainment, as knowledge lies about everywhere at hand to those who observe and think. Seeing that he had to be answerable here for what he believed, and was told it would be so hereafter, he thought it prudent to form his own opinions, since it was

incurring superfluous responsibility to become liable for the errors of others. This gave him the perilous habit of saying what he thought, which led to his being imprisoned for six months in Gloucester Gaol, to encourage him in candour. These were his college days of learning. John Sterling says that "the worst education which teaches self-denial is better than the best which teaches everything else and not that." In this sense the subject of these pages was well instructed, as during his whole life opportunities of self-denial were continually afforded him. Graduating in a gaol was not a recommendation afterwards to profitable employment, and he became a wandering speaker on prohibited subjects of usefulness and progress. At times he might have had some advantageous and accredited position on the press or in popular movements, but it was thought that his name might deter others from doing something who never did anything. The only opportunities which befell him were those of doing what many agreed ought to be done, and of undertaking responsibilities which, owing to legal risks, or a clearer sense of prudence, others declined. Controversies befell him in which he was saved from forming any undue opinion of himself by the disparaging frankness of adversaries, and in which the best and surest part of such knowledge as he acquired was derived from the critical malevolence of opponents. Seeing that spite in argument instructed those whose aim was the mastery of a subject, he regarded even the ill-tempered and malignant opponent as the friend of truth. He, therefore, encouraged and never humiliated these assistant adversaries. He who knows both sides of a disputed question is alone able to be fair to the adverse convictions of others. The spirit of his story is described in the lines of Sir Henry Taylor—

"He had this honesty  
That, undesirous of a false renown,  
He ever wished to pass for what he was.  
Being still  
Deliberately bent upon the right,  
He kept it in the main."

Whittier relates that he left the "mission he had to fulfil, to turn the crank of an opinion mill." Whereas if the present author had a "mission" at all it was to turn that sort of crank. He was an opinion-maker—a very useful business if honestly

and intelligently done. But if the trade is confined to the manufacture of true opinions the "concern" will rarely pay. The sales will never be large and the profit will be small. The owner of such a business will be fortunate if he escape loss. In this respect the writer was not fortunate. The one quality of his mind was that of a propagandist. It coloured his aims, his character, his life. Without foreseeing it, without expecting it, it came to pass, when age and blindness, for a time, overtook him, many eminent persons, who considered him to have rendered some service to the State in his day, contributed, with his humbler friends, means that rendered work no longer *obligatory* to him. As he had always acted on George Herbert's maxim, "Never exceed thy income" (when it was precarious and small), a very limited income was a source of health and enjoyment beyond what any who provided it could know. Opinionativeness and wilfulness are not qualities to be approved, unless they are mainly directed to the service of others. But, though they bring vicissitude, they bring satisfaction, if public improvement has been their incentive. Thus the subject of this autobiography may say in a lesser degree, what could be fully said by him<sup>1</sup> who wrote the lines—

" If he has gained but little for his purse,  
His conscience, happily, is none the worse ;  
He never flouted peasant, fawned on peer,  
He neither stooped to flattery nor to fear,  
Knew in familiar fashion, face to face,  
The wisest and the best of England's race ;  
Still walks erect, although his head is grey,  
And feels his youth not wholly slipped away."

The outline of the whole story the author has to tell is now before the reader, and unless he has adventurous curiosity, he need not proceed further.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Thorold Rogers.

## CHAPTER III.

### *ANCESTORS.*

(1817.)

WHEN Sydney Smith was questioned concerning his ancestors, he answered that his family went no further back than his grandfather, who disappeared at the Assizes, and they asked no questions. My paternal grandfather also "disappeared," but we did "ask questions," though to these no answer came until the next generation. His name was Jacob. He was a man of unusual stature and strength, and stories were told of his carrying a town watchman home on his shoulder who had been unpleasant to him on his way. He had a forge on the old river Rea in Birmingham. His name and business is in the directories of the last century. Through the fraud of a partner, in a law contest as to a right of way, losses by floods, which washed away his premises, trouble overtook him. His family having some property he went away alone to repair his own fortune, and his family never heard of him more. Forty years later an old artizan in Sheffield, made curious by seeing my name on a placard, told me that he had lived in a house in Manchester in which a "Jacob Holyoake" resided—a powerful, wilful man, he described him to be, who, having made a little money, went down one day to meet the Birmingham coach, saying he intended to rejoin his family. He was too late, and in his disappointment went and leaned over the hospital wall, which one less tall could not have done. The place contained many patients with a contagious fever, which he caught. Refusing to believe in his danger when seized, and disliking medicine, he perished. As he had never disclosed

anything concerning himself, he was never identified until the old man told me the story of his isolation and end—forty years subsequent. And thus for the first time his family learned how he died.

There was a tortoise-shell tea caddy in possession of my informant's family given them by my grandfather. It appears that, when death approached, he begged that his friend might be sent for, as he wished to make some communication—doubtless a message to his family ; but as the doctors forbade any one to be admitted, the fever being deadly, his friend was not told of his wish until after his death—so that his secret never transpired.

My grandfather on my mother's side was Richard Groves. His business was that of a bucklemaker. In the early years of the long war, when taxes were heavy, men worked from five o'clock in the morning until nine at night—hours which would drive trades unionists mad in these days. Being provident-minded, during a great part of his life he subscribed to a society from which special provision was to come in his later years ; but when the time came the society broke up, as was the way of societies in his day. In my youth he was a minor dignitary of the Established Church—very minor, indeed, being a beadle of St. Martin's Church. There were two or three differing in degree, but whether of service or seniority I never knew. The office was one of more local awe than emolument. The beadle's staff at a door was the sign of a funeral, and the beadle walking before the humble burial party gave it, in the eyes of the poor, the character of a sacred procession. I used to look with wonder at my grandfather's fine long blue coat, red collar, brass buttons, and his tall japanned staff with gilt nails. When a boy I used to often go round the churchyard with him to see that the gravestones and the grass were all in order. My great delight was to accompany him to his garden in the Bristol Road, which seemed to me a paradise of fruit, and flowers, and vegetables. He would go in the summer as early as four o'clock in the morning. He used to allow me to strike him a light with steel and flint struck over tinder<sup>1</sup>—lucifer matches

<sup>1</sup> Match-boxes bore the name of "tinder-boxes." The tinder being made by burning old linen which readily received the spark from the flint. Brimstone-pointed matches could then be lighted at it. The old process of getting a light is unfamiliar to this generation.

were not invented then—that he might have a morning smoke in his little arbour. He continued to go to his garden until a few weeks before his death, which occurred at a patriarchal age. In the evenings, in his later days, I used to read the prayers to him from the Church prayer-book, when he could no longer do it himself. I can see him now, kneeling on his chair, holding himself upright by his two hands on the back, bowing his head reverently as I read to him, I sitting on a small chair below him. He would put on his beadle's coat at this time, as though his dress had religious association in his mind.

A few years ago an old resident (C. N.), who remembered the circumstance, described in *The Birmingham Weekly Post* the local respect in which he was held, and the large crowd who followed him to his grave.

Such were my two grandfathers ; my grandmothers I never knew, and never heard described.

My ancestral inheritance was not of a nature to elate me, though it gave me pleasure. It consisted of a walking-stick of my grandfather's, of a curious spiral growth, and an inlaid ivory-headed cane belonging to my paternal grandmother, bearing the date of 1699. This estate of sticks and an habitual wilfulness of opinion and imagination, which had no misgiving—always characteristic of my father and his family—were the only signs I knew of a station superior to that in which their lot was cast. A strong sense of pride and capacity of submitting without concern to any privation which came through resenting indignity—were peculiar to them all. My father's sisters had property at Selly Oak, near Birmingham. Often I heard speak of "the Holyoakes, of Selly Oak." In Nantwich Churchyard may still be read a memorial-stone bearing the name of my grandfather's brother, who had held, up to the time of his death, official appointments in that ancient parish.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *PARENTAGE.*

(1817.)

My mother's maiden name was Catherine Groves, and as she took the name of Holy-oak we had a woodland pedigree. She was a Puritan-minded woman, of clear, decided ideas, and had, later in life, a grave, impressive face. Of what she knew she was confident, and never had any doubts. She wished her children to be honest, truthful, and pious, and always set them the example. It never occurred to her to do otherwise than what she said. The contrary never entered into her mind. In those days horn buttons were made in Birmingham, and my mother had a workshop attached to the house, in which she conducted a business herself, employing several hands. She had the business before her marriage. She received the orders ; made the purchases of materials ; superintended the making of the goods ; made out the accounts ; and received the money ; besides taking care of her growing family. There were no "Rights of Women" thought of in her day, but she was an entirely self-acting, managing mistress. There were feasts in the house at that time. I remember stealing out of bed one night to survey from the top of the stairs the well-spread table upon which was the first roasted sucking-pig I saw. The button business died out while I was young, and from the remarks which came from merchants, I learned that my mother was the last maker of that kind of button in the town. It was always a peculiarity of Birmingham that numerous small household trades existed, which gave the inmates independence, and often led—if the trade continued good—to competence or

fortune. I recite these particulars, as they denote a state of industry and society which has long passed away.

My first recollection of my father was seeing him on Sunday and festive days, in drab cloth breeches and boots with white tops, such as are worn now only in the hunting-field, and a brown overcoat, called a "top-coat" then, which looked very rich in my eyes.

My father was in his sixty-third year at the time of his death. He was tall and comely. He had an honest voice and an expression which told you he could be trusted. His manners were free without familiarity. Some men, rise to what rank they may, always retain plebeian habits ; this was not so with my father, although he spent so large a portion of his life as a workman. His associates and also his employers showed him respect in their speech. He owed some of this deference to his mechanical ability. I passed thirteen years by his side in the workshop, and never saw him addressed as other men around him often were. What laws of etiquette he had were his own. When summoned by his employers he always walked up (unless into office or a private room) without uncovering his head, as was usual with others. His not doing so seemed natural to him. It was not disrespect, it was self-respect.

Had the opportunities of learning existed in his youth which exist in our day, his lot in life would have been very different. Mechanics' Institutions were not invented then, and the acquirements of a middle-class boy in 1800 were not many, and his were limited by the early disappearance of his father, whose loss his mother survived but a short time ; and my father was left an orphan, and head of the family, at an early age. He went when a youth to the Eagle Foundry, where he spent more than forty years. Holidays in manufactories were not so much a custom then as now. I never heard that during that long period he was absent through illness or pleasure. If a vacation time occurred at a fair or Christmas time, he spent it at some ideal invention of his own. Though entirely without self-assertion, he had a quiet implacable will. His self-respect once outraged, he never forgot it, and I cannot say he ever forgave it. Wanting the resources which men acquire in good society, or the power which culture gives, he had no means of protecting himself save by reserve ; and his resolution once taken, time

did not wear it out. His resentment became part of his nature. Though inheriting this implacable faculty myself, it has long been clear to me that it is wasted pertinacity. An offence which may arise in thoughtlessness, haste, or necessity, is not worth remembering a day, and an intentional offence is sufficiently despised in less time.

The day before his death, I had come down from London to Birmingham to see him. He had a pipe of Turkish length, the bowl resting on a chair near him, so that he could smoke at will, and I sat on the bedside and smoked with him. He spoke at intervals of my mother. She ever seemed a living mercy in the chamber of the sick. By day and by night she was ever the same patient, kind, unwearying ministrant—unconscious of the obligations of gratitude she created. His voice had its old melody. Once he said, "It is a long time to wait to die, but please God not long." His natural activity of thought still remained with him, and dying seemed to him as something he had still to do. Shortly afterwards the end came.

During all the years of my youth I never remember to have heard my father use an expression which implied that he had ever heard of religion. He never said anything against it, nor anything for it. He left all that to my mother. He seemed to think that she had enough religion for both of them, and in that he was right. He had a pagan mind, and his thoughts dwelt on the human side of life.

We laid him in St. Paul's Churchyard, the burying-place of his relatives, in the grave with "Uncle John," the Yorick of the family. The Rev. Mr. Scarlett read the Church service. In all things we consulted our mother's wishes.

I called upon Mr. Davenport, the rector of St. John's Church, which stood at the back of my father's house, to thank him for his kindness in visiting my father at our request in his illness, and in speaking consoling words to my mother about him. The Rev. Mr. Buckingham, an evangelical preacher, whose chapel my mother attended, I also called upon, to express my sense of the liberal notions of God's dealings with His creatures, that my mother had heard from him, which had resulted in a more cheerful faith than she had been wont to have. Afterwards the Rev. William Sharman, a Wesleyan minister, who

in later years I knew as a valued friend, was a no less kindly and beneficent visitor to my mother. Indeed, he was a more merciful visitant, as he held views of universal salvation, more genial and hopeful than the dubious and anxious tenets of one of the Elect, as my mother hoped she was and deserved to be.

After the death of my father, I advised my mother to rejoin the Rev. John Angell James's Church. She acquired what she called "convictions," under Mr. James's ministry, which she had attended twenty-five years. Mr. Buckingham, her minister above named, was leaving Birmingham, it was therefore I suggested her returning to Mr. James's Church, and I offered to accompany her to Carr's Lane, which I accordingly did; and on Sunday, May 15, 1853, I entered the chapel after an absence of twenty years. What vicissitudes of religious experiences had I gone through since I last walked along its familiar galleries! What an utter, an unforeseen change had my life undergone since then! There was the well-known clock, whose tardy hands I had watched often wearily from the Sunday-school gallery, and the organ with its monotonous peals, which first made me think music an invention for the punishment of our sins.<sup>1</sup> There, too, were those formal, dull ground-glass windows, which did not let in even the merciful blaze of day; and I used to envy the cheerful sun above which dwelt so high in the sky, and was never cooped up in a Sunday School, but looked out over all the world, even on Robinson Crusoe's Island, and was not forced to go to chapel on the bright Sunday morning. There, also, I recognized a face almost in every pew which I had known before—faces I never saw smile, and which now looked as though they had never smiled since we met before. How should those who had read believably the "Anxious Inquirer" ever smile? To my disappointment Mr. James did not preach that night, being absent in London, and I never heard, as I wished to do, his mellifluous eloquence once more.

Nobody seemed to regard me as strong in my youth. When

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. J. A. James's "History of Nonconformity," he remarks that when the organ was proposed, he said, "Let me control it; it must aid the singing, and not be employed for the display of the organist's skill"—or words to that effect. Yet it might be that the skill of a great organist would be no less honourable to human nature, no less acceptable to heaven, than the sermon of the preacher. Art is as holy as "Independency."

I was a boy of seven or eight I heard it said of me, "it was doubtful whether I should be reared." Nothing, however, happened. Then it was said that "the age of thirteen or fourteen would try me." Being found actively alive after that period, the years of "nineteen or twenty" were fixed upon as the "critical time." As I obviously went on living, the prophets of a short life had their opinion that "twenty-nine or thirty" would decide my fate. Burns, Shelley, and Byron had died before mid-age, but as I was not a poet I felt no uneasiness on that account, so that it was long after before it occurred to me that I was really going to live. I was not an unregarding hearer of those observations. I remember mentioning them to my tutor, Daniel Wright, who said he had a friend who had been similarly warned, who actually had consumption all his life, and yet died at seventy-four. He knew the conditions under which he could live, and observed them. Mr. Wright gave me the first confidence in living that I received. My mother, like many pious people of that period, believed that the "three score years and ten" of the Psalmist were the natural end of human life. Many believing persons in pious circles would have lived longer but for this impression. My mother was perplexed at living seven years beyond that time. Mr. Bright seemed to be somewhat of the same opinion in saying :—"What Mr. Schnadhorst or Mr. Harris quoted about the long continuance of the connection between Birmingham and myself is a matter that is extremely doubtful. I think the Psalmist was more right when he made the suggestion which everybody has heard of, and most people come to think seriously of, when he spoke of the threescore years and ten, which means that a man at threescore years and ten is inducted into the order of old men."<sup>1</sup>

After the predictions recounted as to my early decease, it was unimaginable to me that I should be writing at seventy-five in pleasant health. Nor would it happen to me had I been robust. I can count thirty or forty colleagues, all stronger than myself, who died by my side. They could live or work, as strong persons usually do, in a regardless manner, until the machine of life breaks down at once. Temperance in all things, save work, became to me a necessity, and proved a security.

<sup>1</sup> Reply to address to the deputation in acknowledging the address presented to him at One Ash, Rochdale, on his seventieth birthday, November 16, 1881.

## CHAPTER V.

### *EARLY DAYS.*

(1818-25.)

THE business-like way of beginning a biography is to state when and where the subject of it was born, though it is very rarely that the reader sees any necessity for such particulars. As, however, they impart a necessary air of veracity to the story, I give them, merely premising that I had no business to be born at all, neither when I was, nor where I was, nor of whom I was—if without filial impiety I may say so. Parents seldom own it, but many like me have seen aspects of this untoward world when they have felt that they ought to apologize to their children for causing their appearance in it. My mother had many children ; she reared eleven ; but I soon came to see how much better it would have been for her—how much more enjoyment, peace, repose, and freedom from anxiety would have fallen to her—had her family been limited to three or four children.

No. 1, Inge Street, Birmingham, where I was born, still stands, but in a dead street now.<sup>1</sup> The grime of smoke, of decay and comfortlessness, are upon it. Then it was fresh and bright. At No. 2 (next door) Mrs. Massey lived. She was a very large old lady, who sold cakes and tarts, which lay enticingly in a low, broad, bow window. Near hers was a house (No. 5) with green silk curtains, where there resided a neat, little, clean, bright-eyed old lady, who used to charm away warts, and other small maladies. I was under her good-

<sup>1</sup> The Inge family, who own or owned the land on which Inge Street and the next street, Thorpe Street, stand, are natives of Thorpe Constantine, in Staffordshire.—Daniel Baker, Balsall Heath, in *Birmingham Weekly Post*.

natured but ineffectual hands, at times, for warts ; but I found nothing clear them off like a fall at leap-frog, when the sprawling hands came up quite free from those intractable protuberances. Higher up the street (No. 12) lived Mr. Hawksford, a baker and flour seller ; a quiet, placid, pale-faced, mild-mannered man, who, I always thought, looked like God. The first idea my mother gave me of God made me think He was like that miller, who never smiled or spoke, but was always kind and gentle to me—when I took pies to be baked. The idea comes back to my mind as fresh as when it was first formed in my childish, unsuspecting, unthinking fancy. Dr. Mansel had not then delivered his Bampton Lectures, and no ideas of the "Absolute" and the "Unconditioned" had been heard of in Inge Street. Next to the mild, paternal miller, lived a plain, busy, rosy-faced widow, who had no shop window, but kept the best grocer's shop in those parts—where the butter was always fresh. Opposite to her lived a Mr. Roberts, a pleasant-minded Irishman, who would have been as rotund as Falstaff, if the business of grinding glasses for opticians, which he followed, had been a little more prosperous. The history and avocations of everybody in this street are still in my mind.

A little above the wart-witch, with the green silk curtains, dwelt "Sally Padmore." Her house had two steps to it, and the raised floor always delighted me. She often came and nursed us when ill. Well or ill, we gave her trouble enough, kind, patient old soul : but it was the trouble of attachment. She was never angry. She was the only old woman I knew in my youth whose kindly voice never changed. Household trouble came to her, and for three days she was lost. Going one night into an outhouse, I saw her hanging up dead. Her ghost was clear before me. It was shadowy, blue, and well defined. There was no doubt she had killed herself somewhere. How could any one see her ghost if she was not dead ? It was the first ghost I had seen, and I was not likely to forget it, and I knew her too well to mistake it. Next day, while I was alarming all who would listen to me, with the supernatural news, word came that she had returned home as bright and active as usual. This experience weakened my confidence in ghosts, which was implicit till then. Two doors below dear, kind "Old Sally" was the home of a stalwart workman given

to politics. I saw his nose chopped off by a soldier in the Bull Ring Chartist Riots many years later. But the reader will not care to hear about Inge Street and its occupants for ever.

Before our door where I was born stood, on the opposite side, a considerable clump of well-grown trees, amid which was a hatter's working shop. On the adjacent corner of Hurst Street stood the Fox Tavern, as it stands now; but then the sign had been newly painted by a one-armed, short, quick-stepping, nervous-faced, dapper artist; and a very wonderful fox it seemed to me. The sharp-nosed, bushy-tailed animal was rushing to cover—on the sign. I had never seen a fox or a cover, except on that sign. I had only seen a workshop, and I envied the fox who had such a paradise to flee to. Yet we were not without glimpses of real nature about us. Below the Fox Tavern was a “Green”; at the bottom was a garden belonging to a house with a gateway, where one of my father's sisters lived. The garden fence was not a dead wall, but a low, wood paling, through which children could see the flowers in the garden. From the end of Inge Street the trees of the parsonage ground made a small wood before us, and apparently in their midst, but really beyond them, arose the spire of the “Old Church”—as we called St. Martin's. On summer afternoons and moonlight nights the church spire, rising above the nestling trees, presented an aspect of a verdant village church in the midst of the busy workshop town. Down through the “Green,” the way led to Lady Well Walk, where more gardens lay, and the well was wide, clear, and deep. Hundreds of times did I fetch water from it. We had a pump in our own yard, but we did not think much of the pump—and we did it no injustice. Gone now—gone long ago—is the glory of well, and the Lady's Walk, and the “Green,” and the Parsonage Ground, and the trees, and church spire. The spire is still about, but the sight of it has been hidden by buildings of every order of deformity. Inge Street, now, looking down from the Horse Fair end, is, as it were, the entrance to a coal-pit, which, when I first knew it, appeared as the entrance to a sylvan glen.

In the midst of these scenes and persons described, was the beginning of things to me. If I go back on the principle Prospero proposed to Miranda and state—

“ By what—house or person?  
Of anything the image tell that  
Hath kept in my remembrance.  
How  
That it lives in my mind ; what see I else,  
In the dark backward and abyss of time ? ”

That will be far enough.

The first time I was conscious of being in this world, I was sitting upon a rug on the floor. A figure in a black dress was vanishing through an open door. In front another open door disclosed a road. Trees were bending in the wind, and there were sunlight and shadow on the ground. I did not know that there was a sound in the world nor a living being save the servant in the black dress. The quiet shade seemed sad, and the sentiment crept into my mind. It could not arise from disappointment, I being too young for coherent thought ; nor dissatisfaction with the world in general, which would have been as impertinent as premature at that early age. However, it came—the feeling of sadness was there. That scene was the beginning of life to me.

It appears, from what I afterwards came to know, that at my birth my mother wished me to be called “ George,” after my father. On the other hand, my aunts on my father’s side wished me to be called “ Jacob,” after my grandfather. As neither side would give in, both names were given to me—bearing which I became an unconscious peacemaker in the family. For myself I never liked the name of Jacob. When I came to have a preference I preferred that of Esau, who was an honest man of wise ways. A modern writer on Scriptural names explains that Jacob means, “ active investigation of belief.” If this be true, it would reconcile me to it ; but the recorded antecedents and behaviour of Jacob in the Old Testament are not at all to my mind.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *ARTIZAN LIFE SIXTY YEARS AGO.*

(1830.)

BEFORE my mother's horn button business ceased, I learned to wind the copper wire on a flat steel turned by a lathe, to stamp the coil into shank form under a press, and to cut the shanks with shears which often strained my little hands. Afterwards I had to stick the shanks into circular pieces of perforated damp horn, called "moles"—hammer them in—rivet them in a vice, and file them. The buttons were then shaken in a long bag, which dried and polished them. They were then strung into grosses, and delivered to the merchants who ordered them. All the old processes are still distinctly in my mind.

It was an attraction to me to watch at a tinman's shop window, and see him make lanterns. At length he consented to take me, when the afternoon school was over, to work through the evening soldering the handles on lanterns. I was a small boy then, and though I often burned my fingers with the soldering iron, I earned in time as much as 3s. 6d. per week piece-work. Afterwards I persuaded my father to take me with him to the Eagle Foundry, from a desire to be at work. I must have been very young then, as I remember asking my father to let me hold his hand as I went along by his side in the early morning ; and his hand, enclosing mine, was a new sensation of pleasure, and seemed to put fresh life into me. The time of being at the foundry was six o'clock, and I was often half asleep as we went up Suffolk Street on the way to Broad Street, where the foundry <sup>1</sup> was, and where I was taught to be a whitesmith, working in white iron and burnished steel.

<sup>1</sup> Foundry is a name usually applied to a casting shop ; but the Eagle Foundry included engine works and the manufacture of most heavy things in

I see now the long, dull foundry yard as I saw it for thirteen years from the window at which I worked. On the right is the little house where the warehouseman lived, who had charge of the premises at night: and, on the same side, the waggon-way leading to the furnaces, the mills, and the casting shops. The warehouse and show-rooms filled up the right of the yard to the gates. On the left were ramshackle sheds for storing sheet iron. Piles of wrought iron bars lay on the ground. A cold-looking iron pump stood close by, and heaps of old cast iron broken up for blasting. The foundry cart is loading near the stable door, and at the top, through the open gateway, the town people are passing, and the distant sunshine falls upon the broad road outside. The sunshine always seemed apart from us.

One workman at the foundry was a tall, lean old man: he was very gaunt, and I think never had enough to eat; but I had more respect for him than any other man there. His business was to do the forged wrought-iron work for kitchen ranges and black iron stoves. Each man made his own tools, and this old workman's pliers and tongs were the most perfect of any one's; everything he forged was excellent in fitness and finish, and, though he was paid no better than if he had done his work slovenly, he never abated a blow on that account. He had an honest passion for perfect work. He was a Staffordshire man. I cannot recall his name, or I would give it to his honour. He had a daughter named Esther. She was tall like her father, but did not remind us in any other way of the Esther whose beauty pleaded for the Jews. She was the only woman employed at the works. She had a little shop with a fireplace and doorway only, in which she black-leaded stoves, which she did as conscientiously as her father forged at the anvil. She was always ready for work. I never remember to have seen her sit down.

There were two members of the firm—one was Mr. Samuel Smith, a Unitarian, a placid gentleman. The men were always glad when it fell to him to pay them, as he had a kindly word

iron, and had many whitesmiths, blacksmiths, and engine smiths upon the premises, which had a frontage in Broad Street extending, on one hand, to Mr. Rabone's, the merchant's, and, on the other, to Mr. Crompton's, the copper dealer's. In depth the foundry extended nearly to the canal in the Old Wharf.

for them, and would sometimes make them small advances when the wages of the piece-workers fell low. William Hawkes was the other partner, to whom no workman made any request. He had a brother Timothy, who was tall and slender, and who had abundant black hair, and a Jewish cast of countenance, quite unlike his brother William, who had red hair, and not much of it. Timothy, when about thirty years of age, became a Methodist, and grew quite fanatical in his new persuasion ; but so far from making him morose, it seemed rather to increase his kindly nature. A workman was caught by the machinery in the mill, and his leg torn from his body. He kept his bed until his death, living a year or more, and Mr. Timothy used to go and sit with him, and pray with him, and make small gifts for his comfort. His brother William—the acting “Master” as he was called—was mainly an unpleasant person. He was exacting, and always spoke with harshness. I saw old men who were in such terror at his approach that they would strike their hands instead of the chisel they were using, and were afraid of dismissal or reduction of wages in consequence of the incapacity which he witnessed, and which his presence caused. Piece-workers and day-workers were so continually subjected to reduced prices and wages that they never felt certain on Monday morning what they would receive on Saturday evening. There were no trade intimations where other employment might be obtained—no energy in seeking it—there was continual resentment, sullenness, and disgust, but no independence, or self-dependence. If a man saved a little money, he carefully concealed that he had done so ; if he could afford to dress cleanly and moderately well, he was afraid to do it, as his wages were sure to be reduced. I remember a fine, well-built young man coming to the foundry from Sheffield, where there was always independence among the workmen. He undertook the deadliest work in the mill, the grinding. There was great astonishment when he entered the foundry gates wearing a well-fitting, handsome suit of black clothes. The master was as much astonished at his audacity as the men were. He changed his clothes in the mill and put on a rough grinder’s dress, mounted before the deadly stones, and worked like a splashed, mud-covered Hercules—but he would wash, dress, and leave the foundry like a gentleman. His employer at once

concluded that he had given him too much wages ; but the moment a reduction was proposed, he resented it, drew the money due to him, and went away entirely. It was almost the only example of independence I remember to have seen.

One incident occurred which filled me with lasting indignation. The younger brother of a man named Barton who had been years employed in the mill was found by William Hawkes (the acting partner), one meal-time, removing a file from one of the shops. He was an industrious, well-conducted young fellow—he had not taken the file away, which was worth about 7d., though he probably intended taking it. He was apprehended, and transported for ten years, on the evidence of the master. A week's imprisonment would have been sufficient penalty for a first offence in a mill where theft was unknown. The arbitrary and continual reduction of prices by the master was a far more serious theft of the earnings of all the men. That was the way in which employers behaved generally, so far as I knew them. Mr. Hawkes, nevertheless, did kind things in his harsh way which were intended for the welfare of the men, and I used to compare him to a sheep-dog, who kept the wolf from attacking them, but bit the sheep himself when they turned aside. I resolved not to be bitten, and it filled my mind with hatred to see poor hard-working men about me subjected to the process.

The condition of mechanics who worked in little workshops of their own was bad. They had to sell their small manufactures to merchants. The men who lived in the town, and those who came miles into it, with the produce of their week's work, were kept hanging about the merchants' warehouses until nine, ten, and often eleven o'clock on Saturday night, before they were paid their money ; and their wives had to make their little marketings after their husbands reached home. There seemed no end to this, and no way out of it. There were no Saturday half-holidays thought of then.

There stands now, or stood when I last was there, a factory or warehouse at the head of Lady Well Walk, where in my childhood was an open, spacious coal-yard, kept by a Mrs. Gillybrand. On dark, cold, drizzling Saturday nights children were sometimes sent for a barrow of coals for Sunday fires. They used to stand by a brazier fire blazing in the coal-yard—

sometimes for an hour waiting for barrows to come in—turning themselves round, being half frozen and half toasted. At the Fox Tavern, and at the mild, white-faced baker's, loads of coals were at times delivered. No coal came round in sacks at other houses, and a number of small barrows were kept at Gilly-brand's, where buyers did their own cartage, or rather barrowage. As, on Saturday nights, wages, as I have said, were paid late, barrows were in demand often until midnight. A level barrow-load was 6d., a full one 8d. The buyer had just what the vendor threw in. No measure or scales were used. When a barrow was to be had it was trundled home. I pitied those who had to go out in the dark and cold on this last errand. I dreaded it as a negro would be sent out in the snow. I did not know then that these were the "good old times" of which I should afterwards hear foolish persons prate.

Though there were no trades unions in my time among whitesmiths, I could see, even then, that excellence of workmanship on the part of a man, intelligent enough to know its value, was a source of independence. There were two brothers at the foundry named Threstlecock—one did the great forgings for the steam engines, the other fitted the engines—a third man, very large and fat, with a small bullet head, and Welsh impetuosity of manner, made the great castings, which sometimes consumed a ton of molten iron. These men ventured to dress somewhat better than others, and took more liberty as to time of coming or leaving. They obtained higher wages for their work, and no attempt at abatement was tried upon them. My father and one or two other men were all that came within this class, and he would have fared still better but for his known attachment to the place where he had been longer than any other man. His children took him away at last that he might end his days in sunshine and rest, but he doubtless would have lived longer had they left it optional with him to linger about the old place at will. His pleasure was in workmanship.

Long before that time he bought some newly-invented machinery for turning bone buttons, hired steam power at the Baskerville Mill, and placed me in charge of it. Working one day, leaning closely over my work, the "chock" caught a silk handkerchief, of which the ends were loose, round my neck, I was drawn down in a moment, and nearly strangled. Fortu-

nately the mill band turning the lathe was a loose one, and I had power to stop the rotation for a short time, but could not extricate myself. Mr. Roberts, the Irish optician, who lived in our street, was grinding spectacle-glasses in an adjoining room, and heard my calls for help, stopped the machinery, and unwound me, just as the "chock" was beating into my throat ; otherwise my head would have been wrung off, and I should have been an observer of the operation.

By the time I was thirteen or fourteen I made a small bright steel fire-gate, with all the improvements then known, as a chimney ornament for my mother. All the drilling in the foundry was done by hand : as this was very laborious, I devised a perpendicular drill to be worked by mill power. At that time I had never seen one. My delight was in mechanical contrivance. Not being able to buy mathematical instruments, I made two pairs of compasses for pencil and pen —one with double point and slide, hammered out of bits of sheet iron. My tutor being pleased with them caused them to be laid on the table at the annual distribution of prizes of the Mechanics' Institution. This led to my being publicly presented with a proper case of mathematical instruments, given by Mr. Isaac Pitman, the inventor of phonography. Mr. Lloyd, a banker in Birmingham, caused George Stephenson, one night when he was at the House of Commons, to put my name down on his staff of young engineers. I was very proud to have my name on his list, though nothing came of it, Mr. Lloyd having probably no opportunity of again calling the attention of the famous engineer to it : and I had no other friend in communication with him. What a different career mine had been had I been called up !

Mechanical employment seems to me far preferable to any other open to men in cities. Had there been in my time means of higher education in evening classes, when degrees could be won without University attendance—impossible to me—I should have remained in the workshop. There is more independence in pursuits of handicraft, and more time for original thought, than in clerkship or business. That which made me desirous of escaping from the workshop was the hopelessness of sufficient and certain wages, and the idea of personal subjection associated with it.

It has sometimes seemed to me that I was born with steel and books in my blood. About the books I am not so clear, though I have made many after their kind. But that I had a mechanical faculty beyond the average in my circle was admitted there. I could tell the quality of steel and other metals just as others can tell textile fabrics at a glance. When a youth I would fit and finish bright steel work better than men twice my age, and who had twice my wages. My father, who came of a race of armourers, had, with other attainments, skill in forging. Sheffield men, who were the best artificers in my time where I worked as a whitesmith, always came to my father to do their difficult forging. I often swung the striking hammer for my father at the anvil, and to this day I have more pleasure and aptitude for that form of physical exercise than for any other. Good, well-made, well-contrived, well-finished machinery always gives me as much enjoyment as a good painting.

The capacity to work as a whitesmith or engineer has always been a source of pride to me. Anything I could do in my mechanic days I could do ever after. It gave me a sense of independence. If speaking, teaching, or writing failed me, I was always ready for the bench.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *LEADERS OF THE FIRST BIRMINGHAM POLITICAL UNION.*

(1830-3.)

THE most remarkable Birmingham man of that day (1830) was Thomas Attwood. He was Royalist and Radical, not remarkable for intellectual strength, but had dignity of presence and a persuasive and orotund manner of speaking. He was the founder and moving spirit of the Birmingham Political Union. Being a banker, he imparted to it an air of monetary responsibility. He and Joshua Scholefield were the first members for Birmingham. Attwood was the member for the town who was most popular with women. When he was canvassing they were abundant in the courts and streets. He not only kissed the children—he kissed their mothers. At one election he was reputed to have kissed eight thousand women. Though a leader of the masses, he was no democrat, and would have induced the Political Union to accept a £20 franchise, but for the refusal of the more robust politicians of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who, like the late Sir Joseph Cowen, were followers of Lord Durham. They held a great meeting on the Town Moor, and declared for a £10 franchise. But for the Newcastle men, the electoral constituency of England would have been “confined to £20 householders.” The Birmingham Political Union was the most conspicuous force which impelled the Reform Bill of 1832, such as it was. Attwood had a theory of currency which he thought would bring prosperity to the people, and he sought a Reformed House of Commons, mainly because he thought he could thereby carry his financial theory into law.

Robert Owen, in like manner, resolved to appeal to the people to carry his social scheme of "Villages of Co-operation,"<sup>1</sup> when Lords Liverpool, Lauderdale, and Sidmouth failed him. Cobden and Bright, with a more genuine political sympathy with the people, were for a broader measure of electoral reform, as better calculated to carry and maintain free trade. All the £10 voters of Birmingham did was to send a banker and a wealthy merchant to Parliament. In doing this they had the justification of political gratitude. Yet George Edmonds was the man who had greater claims than either.

Joshua Scholefield, Thomas Attwood's colleague in the representation of the town, was a better Liberal than Attwood. He was a small rotund man, with fire and purpose, and a ruddy complexion. He menaced the Government with marching on London with a hundred thousand men to inquire why the Reform Bill lingered so long. The Duke of Wellington took notice of the projected visit. He was not afraid of us, but did not want us in London.

In later years, Joshua's son William was elected member for the borough. He was a man of gentle manners, of good commercial knowledge and authority, who carried through Parliament the Industrial Partnerships Bill, which first made participation of profits with workmen possible. When in Parliament he had a residence at Runnymede Island, on which Magna Charta was signed, which was enviable. Runnymede was historic, but Runnymede was damp. I met him frequently at the House of Commons in his later years. His health was failing, but he was judicious in attendance, which he limited in accordance with his strength. When a division was due, he infallibly appeared.

Lawrence Street Chapel, where the Socialist meetings were held in those days, was built by the Southcottians. Mr. Bradley, a tobacconist, was the chief supporter of the little church. It was he who bought the silver cradle in which the little Shiloh was to be rocked, which Joanna in due time was to bring forth, but never did. The last occupation of the chapel (1890) is by the Kyrle Society. The peculiarity of the Southcottian leaders, which excited more prejudice against them than their harmless

<sup>1</sup> So far as I have found they were first given this name by the *Black Dwarf* in 1824.

Messianic expectations, was that they wore long beards. Ignorance, always intolerant, resented this liberty of differing from their neighbours even in so small a thing as wearing their natural beards. No one understood then the truth of Schiller's aphorism that "toleration only comes with larger information."

George Frederick Muntz, who afterwards became member for Birmingham, was the only other man in the town who wore a beard.<sup>1</sup> He was, when he became member for the borough, the first civilian who wore a beard in the House of Commons—a military officer only was accorded the limited liberty of wearing a moustache. Mr. Muntz would have been insulted for wearing a beard, but he carried a thick malacca cane, which it was known he would apply to the shoulders of any person who affronted him. It was this which protected him from ridicule in Birmingham and in the House of Commons. He was the most powerful and resolute Radical in the town. A story told of him in my youth was, that going home one night to his house in Soho, he was attacked by two robbers. He knocked them down and brought them both into town and gave them into custody. A local writer, one Joseph Allday, was editor of a paper called the *Argus*, which he enlivened by offensive personalities. Mr. Muntz, being compromised by some remarks, went down to the office, seized Mr. Allday by the collar, drew him over the counter into the middle of the street, when the editor found that personal allusion to Mr. Muntz was liable to be tempered with an application of his malacca cane. The assault came before the magistrates, with what results I do not remember. In the later days of his membership, Mr. Muntz was not edifying on the platform, and swore in his speeches. Mr. William Cope tells of kindly acts of his. One day meeting an old woman in Livery Street wheeling coals up the hill, he took the barrow in hand and wheeled it up for her.

Philip Henry Muntz, a younger brother of George Frederick, also wore a beard, when he came to have one, but his hair was not dark like his brother's. He had the same brusqueness of manner, but less coarseness. I heard him make his first speech in public. He afterwards became member for the town. They were the two fighting Radicals. It is singular that the only

<sup>1</sup> In after years George Dawson.

descendant of the family in Parliament should be a Tory. I suppose there is a fatty degeneration of the understanding in well-fed Liberals, as sometimes occurs otherwise in too well-fed men.

Thomas Clutton Salt, a vehement member of the Political Union, had an ornate style which entertained, but left little impression on his audience. His quality was best seen in an address which he issued to the town, which now has the merit of showing that Birmingham women took interest in politics before John Stuart Mill's influence urged them to organize themselves as a separate power in the State. One passage in Mr. Salt's address said "the slave spirit crouches in fear—the tyrant spirit contrives new oppressions—the Jew spirit tortures for gold ; therefore do women meddle with politics ;" and more to the same effect. Each paragraph gave impassioned reasons "why women meddle with politics."

Though no one then thought of giving women any political rights, both parties were ready to avail themselves of their political influence, and when the Liberals of Birmingham were invoking the aid of the women of progress, the Tories of Norwich were issuing the following address :—

"TO THE LADIES OF NORWICH.

"None but the brave deserve the fair.

"If ever the sweets of social virtue, the warmth of honest zeal, the earnings of industry, the prosperity of trade, had any influence in the female breast, you have now a happy opportunity of exercising it to the advantage of *your* country—*your* cause. If ever the feelings of a parent, wife, sister, friend, or lover, had a sympathy with *public virtue*, now is *your* time to indulge the *tender passion*. If ever you felt for the ruin and disgrace of England, and for the *miseries and depravities* of the obnoxious Reform Bill, you are called on by the most tender and affectionate tie in nature to exert *your* persuasive influence on the minds of a father, brother, husband, or lover ; tell them not to seek filial duty, congenial regard, matrimonial comfort, nor *tender compliance*, till they have saved *your* country from perdition ! *posterity from slavery* History furnishes us with instances of *female patriotism* equal to any in the page of *war* and politics. Oh ! may the generous and beatific charm of female persuasions prevail with the *citizens of Norwich*, to espouse the cause of *liberty*, of

"STORMONT AND SCARLETT."

It never occurred to these eloquent adjurers that if women were thus able to exercise political influence they were entitled to use it for themselves.

After the Reform Bill was carried the Union dissolved itself, as the Anti-Corn Law League subsequently did when the Corn Laws were repealed. Mr. G. F. Muntz proposed that the Union should be hung up like a clean gun, to be taken down if need arose—a figure of speech suitable to a gun-making town. The gun grew rusty on its nail.

Robert Kelly Douglas was an active leader of the Union. He was spoken of as the editor of *The Birmingham Journal*. A card of membership which I held—which I still have—is signed with his familiar initials, “R. K. D., secretary,” bearing the words, “Birmingham Political Union, Instituted 1830—Revived 1837.” His bold, clear handwriting was like his speeches. He was fluent, relevant, and forcible. He was tall, slender, with a fine head of grey hair, and of dignified, cultivated manners.

At the great meeting known as the “Gathering of the Unions,” 200,000 on Newhall Hill sang the Call,

“ Over mountain, over plain,  
Echoing wide, from sea to sea,  
Peals, and shall not peal in vain,  
The trumpet call of liberty.”

Then others made reply,

“ Lo ! we answer ; see ! we come !  
Quick at freedom’s holy call ;  
We come, we come, we come, we come,  
To do the glorious work of all ;  
And hark we raise from sea to sea,  
Our sacred watchword Liberty ! ”

There were nine stanzas containing fifty-four lines in all. Never did political meeting so large sing a song so long, before or since in this world.

The Rev. Hugh Hutton put up a sonorous prayer. Unitarians in those days preached in Johnsonian sentences, and used more vowels than any other religionists. Only Unitarian ministers at that time would pray for Liberals, or who would pray among them. We had a Catholic priest, the Rev. T. M. M'Donnel, a member of the council of the Political Union ; a tall, clear, articulate, well-informed speaker, with grey hair and public spirit ; but he never did what Mr. Hutton did. A Birmingham meeting never asked him. They would not imagine

that a Catholic could have got a blessing down from heaven if he tried. The one leader who had most force of character, and who was best instructed on Liberal principle, was George Edmonds, a schoolmaster and solicitor. He had the protruding underlip, the physical sign of capacity for oratory, as might be seen in Lord Brougham, George Thompson, and other orators of mark. There are orators in plenty without this characteristic, but to those who have, it gives a sort of prehensile advantage over an audience. More than an orator with a commanding voice and measured force of delivery, Edmonds was a Radical thinker, and friend of Jonathan Wooler in the days of the *Black Dwarf*. Edmonds was tried with Major Cartwright and Wooler, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, for promoting the election of Sir Charles Wolseley, Bart., as M.P. for Birmingham, 1820, no Speaker's writ authorizing it. Jonathan Wooler concluded the twelfth volume of the *Black Dwarf* in 1824. In his "Final Address" he states that "he commenced the work under the idea that there was a public in Britain devotedly attached to Parliamentary reform. This was an error. It is true that hundreds of thousands have petitioned and clamoured for reform, but the event has proved what the *Black Dwarf* treated as a calumny, that they only clamoured for bread . . . and were not reformers, but bubbles thrown up in the fermentation of society. . . . The majority has decided in its crueler moments 'for things as they are!'" Yet within eight years the great Reform Bill was carried by, what even Wellington had to admit, was the universal demand of the country. This is a remarkable instance of that political despair on the part of an insurgent politician, resembling the darkness which precedes the dawn.

When Birmingham became a Parliamentary borough, Edmonds came forward as a candidate, but was requested to stand aside in favour of Mr. Scholefield. In the day of triumph it is seldom that a constituency selects as its representative the man who laboured for it in perilous, unfriended, and apathetic days. When such a man claims recognition, he is told that he is dividing the Liberal *interest*—which appears not to lie that way. Ultimately, Mr. Edmonds was made Clerk of the Peace. The last time I saw him he was one of an audience at a dis-

cussion I held with an adversary in the town. There was no person among its public men of the days of my youth whose presence could give me so much pleasure.

The chief Radical critic of the Union, who better understood the principle of democracy and cared more for it than the leaders, except George Edmonds, was one George Russell, who made a little fortune in Moor Street by printing and selling Catnatch songs. Had Macaulay visited Birmingham he would have gone over Mr. Russell's copious ballad store with delight. He had the finest collection in all the Midlands. Unfortunately, Russell, like Mr. Corbett (contemporaneous with him in Radical agitation), had a querulous manner and acted on the Pauline maxim of being "instant in season and out of season, and as he was generally "out," he was disliked. But he had the root of the matter in him in political thoroughness. He left £12,000 to found a secular school, of which he designated me as the teacher; but the bequest was disputed. I was examined in the case, but, not being able to take oath, Mr. Arthur Ryland, the Commissioner of the Inquiry, accepted my affirmation. All the same, legal objection could be taken to it. The bequest was annulled. Secular teaching was held to be hostile to Christianity, and much against the validity of the bequest.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF BIRMINGHAM MEN.*

(1830-6.)

THE habit I had acquired of frequenting chapels and missionary meetings led me to attend political assemblies. This further enlarged my views of life and duty, which the religion taught me had hidden from me.

The political impulses by which Birmingham had become distinguished had quickened thought of the human kind in relation to this world. For five years I was a scholar in the Carr's Lane Sunday Schools, yet save Watts's hymns and reading in the Bible, I had learned nothing. There was a sand class for seven or eight boys, in which lessons in rudimentary writing were given. But beyond this, secular instruction in these schools did not go. Once the Rev. John Angell James, the pastor, delivered a week-night public address, in which he counselled young men to be content in the station and with the lot which Providence had assigned them. Dissent was no better than the Church as regarded secular progress. When I heard Mr. James's counsel, I believed it. It was logical Christian doctrine I knew, and I could see that if acted upon, the Political Union was an organized sin—as its object was to alter and raise the condition of the people. Had Mr. James himself acted upon his own principle, he would not have been a preacher.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. James, who was born at Blandford, Dorset, in 1785, was intended for commercial life, but was advised by the Rev. Dr. Bennett to study for the ministry. There was no great thinker in those days like Mr. Ruskin to teach the world that piety and progress were the same. Mr. Ruskin has told us that, "If no effort be made to discover, in the course of their early training,

Birmingham being in the heart of the Midlands of England, its people have insularity of character as well as of race. The various nations of invaders who, for more than a thousand years, bestowed on England their malevolent presence, no doubt penetrated more or less to Birmingham. But the British founders and their descendants probably kept substantial occupancy of the interior of the country. Our furious incursionists doubtless left behind them turbulent additions to the population—perpetuating a like spirit along the invaded shores. Thus to this day the coast-land population show energy and unrest of character. The Midlanders have steadier attachment to independence and to ways of their own. Insisting upon liberty as an ancient inheritance, they regard as aliens any who would disturb their exercise of it.

Still in my mind is the perfect surprise with which I first became aware of having the instinct of race. When the Crimean War came it was popular. It was found out by the people that we were committed to fighting somebody. Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and a few other great politicians fully understood that we ought not to be fighting at all. The hereditary instinct of a warlike people once awakened, is quite sufficient to make any conflict popular. There was much less political intelligence then than now, and hardly any political conscience as regarded foreign nations. When news came that my countrymen were fighting in the trenches of Sebastopol, my wish was that they might win, whether right or wrong. The great French war had ceased two years before I was born. England had never been at war in my time. There had been no inspiration of battle in the people within my experience. The martial spirit slumbered as though it were dead in the land, yet I had it and knew it not. At any lull in the Crimean carnage, I was anxious that diplomacy should intervene to terminate it, but while we were fighting I wished the English to win. It was not right that we should win if we were wrong.

for what services the youth of a nation are individually qualified: nor any care taken to place those who have unquestionably proved their fitness for certain functions, in the offices they could best fulfil—then to call the confused wreck of social order and life brought about by malicious collision and competition, an arrangement of Providence, is quite one of the most insolent and wicked ways in which it is possible to take the name of God in vain.”—RUSKIN: “Time and Tide,” pp. 7, 8.—1867.

It means an ill organization of international affairs when any one succeeds who is in the wrong—whether an individual or a nation. Yet an unknown and unsuspected instinct of race set me wishing that, while fighting was going on, we might succeed somehow or anyhow. I do not justify the sentiment, but I own to having had it.

Such was the effect of insularity of birth and race that I for a long time mistrusted all people not English—yet never disliking them as persons; for their physical difference in appearance and alien ways were always attractive to me. What I mistrusted was their judgment and opinion, until experience taught me that sentiments of justice are, in the main, the same among all people, although their way of displaying it is so different that you doubt whether they know what it is. Insularity of position gives self-containment of character to a people unused to consulting opinion outside themselves. They hold their views with obstinacy because they are theirs, and their first instinct is to distrust the judgment of those who differ from them. If they manifest narrowness of view, which comes from self-sufficiency, it gives intensity to their character, and they maintain their opinion with unity and force, and their determination can be counted upon in any contest in which they engage. Judging from myself, I regarded the coast towns of England as though they were inhabited by alien races. When Birmingham men enter upon political agitation, the reader will think them likely to be resolute in it. During the active years of the Political Union my days were passed within a few yards of its office. I knew its leaders in the street and on the platform, and their conduct accorded with the impression of Birmingham men herein described. The legend of the town, adopted on its incorporation, is rightly and creditably "Forward"—the family motto of the Duke of Queensberry.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *ORATORS WHO CAME OUR WAY.*

(1837.)

IN 1831 a few words on a sheet of paper stuck on Mr. Muntz's warehouse door in Great Charles Street, at nine o'clock in the morning, was notice enough to summon 12,000 or 20,000 persons to Newhall Hill at midday. When a youth, not fifteen, I had often been out at the meetings, and knew that there was a Reform Bill in the air.

The most famous of the oratorical visitors of the Political Union was Daniel O'Connell. In those days the voices of the great Irish leaders were always given to enlarge English freedom, as they have often been since. On one occasion a vast assembly beyond compute, met on Newhall Hill. Early in the morning a band of four hundred women had marched from Rowley Regis (locally called "Rowley Rags," which better described it), a place several miles from Birmingham, and had taken up a position in the hollow, near the platform. The tall form of O'Connell was conspicuous as he rose to speak. The moment his eye lighted on the unexpected mass of women in front of him, the quick instinct of the orator decided his first sentence, and he began, "Surrounded as I am by the fair, the gentle, and the good," which at once captivated his feminine hearers. Their occupation prevented them being very "fair," and holding a position amid 200,000 men—the number computed to be present—showed they were not very "gentle"; but they were "good," patriotic women, and they cheered the flattering allusion to themselves. The men behind cheered because the women cheered; and the crowd behind them, who

were too far away to hear well, cheered because those before them cheered, and thus the fortune of the great oration was made. What Sir Bulwer Lytton said of O'Connell's speaking was true at Newhall Hill :—

“Once to my sight the giant thus was given,  
Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven :  
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound  
Even to the centre of the hosts around ;  
And as I thought, rose the sonorous swell  
As from some church tower swings the silver bell.  
Aloft and clear, from airy tide to tide  
It glided, easy as a bird may glide ;  
To the last verge of that vast audience.”

O'Connell had three manners : a didactic tone in the Courts—dignified argument in the House of Commons—raciness on the platform, where he abandoned himself to himself, on the Yankee principle, “Fill yourself full of your subject as though you were a barrel, take out the bung, and let human nature caper.” In London we have seen O'Connell take off his necktie and open his collar to give himself more freedom. On one occasion, referring to the births in Dublin having decreased 5,000 a year for four years, he exclaimed, “I charge the British Government with the murder of those 20,000 infants” (who never were born). It was said with so much raciness that the audience did not perceive the delightful absurdity. Mr. Sam Timmins told me that an Irish schoolmaster who was present remarked to him, “That's worthy of my country.” In one sense, O'Connell was right—British misrule had caused the depopulation of Dublin.

Another speaker who interested the residents more than any other platform visitor to Birmingham, was Charles Reece Pemberton. Though born in South Wales, he resided during his youth in Birmingham. His life was all vicissitude and romance. Of a sensitive, poetic, and dramatic temperament, he found an unsympathetic clerkship, to which he was confined, unendurable and ran away with a companion to Liverpool, where they were seized by a pressgang then prowling about. His friend, endeavouring to swim from the warship to which they were drafted, was drowned. Pemberton remained seven years in the service, and became acquainted with several

foreign stations. He had an irrepressible passion for acting and came to have theatres abroad. As a lecturer and expositor of Shakspeare he was unrivalled. He had a handsome, intellectual face, what the French would call *spirituelle* in expression, and his bright animation of manner, an intense hatred of injustice and sympathy with human progress made him the most popular lecturer who ever entered a Mechanics' Institution, to whose members he chiefly spoke. In a hundred towns none who ever heard him ceased to speak of him. His lectures on Shakspeare he illustrated by reciting passages; but his criticisms were not destined to introduce the passages—the passages were selected to illustrate the criticism. As he excelled in comedy as well as tragedy, every lecture afforded both instruction and delight. He wrote tragedies and songs, and some autobiographical chapters (sent to W. J. Fox when he edited the *Monthly Repository*) under the signature of "Pel Verjuice." The papers excited great interest, which led to Mr. Fox seeking his acquaintance. The first theatrical representation Pemberton ever saw was in the Birmingham Theatre, and his description of that first night is a memorable piece of writing. His pen was as vivid as his imagination. His account of a nomination meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall in 1835 tells the story of the beginning of electoral life in Birmingham. He wrote or spoke only of that which he had himself seen or felt. The impressions of the events and experience through which he had passed, he retained with what many thought a supernatural fidelity. He was playing one night at Hereford, having taken the theatre, as was his wont, to perform a series of "Shakspeare's tragic glories," as he styled them. Serjeant Talfourd, who was there during the Assize week, hearing that a new actor was in the town, went down to witness his performance, and was so struck by it that, finding but a small audience present, he paid the expenses of the house succeeding nights, that he might witness all the representations. In the *New Monthly* he afterwards described Pemberton as "a new actor of real tragic power," who might come to compare with Macready or Kean. By Talfourd's influence he appeared afterwards at Covent Garden Theatre. "Critics differed as to the merits of Pemberton's acting, and contradicted themselves more than they usually do, which

meant that there was new merit of some kind in the performances. Mediocrity never excites controversy," as Mr. Serjeant Talfourd said, writing upon this subject at the time. "The very difference of opinion means much. Mere mediocrity is not thus mistaken. It has no chameleon hues."

An affection of the throat, which timely cessation from lecturing might have rendered curable, killed him. By the generosity of Serjeant Talfourd, who bade him draw upon him for whatever he required, he went abroad, but without advantage, and returned to die at his brother's house in Ludgate Hill, Birmingham. I was the only stranger whom he wished admitted to his room in his last days. He felt keenly that when his powers were at their greatest, and when engagements, which would have made him opulent, awaited him, his strength was exhausted. His mind was filled with brilliant projects of service to the people. His last thoughts were expressed in lines which he wrote.

" Oh, could I do, of my vast will  
 One millionth part—what joy would thrill  
 My soul ! though lone and lorn,  
 I die : ennobled by this shame,  
 I'd court as worthiest, holiest fame,  
 Contemporaneous scorn ! "

His friend John Fowler, of Sheffield, published a volume containing his life and works, and Ebenezer Elliott wrote one of his finest poems upon him, entitled, "Poor Charles." During his days of health he had given two performances in the Birmingham Theatre for the Building Fund of the Mechanics' Institution, and we erected a memorial over him in Key Hill Cemetery. I was secretary of the committee, and W. J. Fox wrote his epitaph.

Beneath this stone  
 Rest the mortal remains of  
 Charles Reece Pemberton,  
 Who died March 3rd, 1840, aged 50.  
 His gentle and fervid nature,  
 His acute sensibility  
 And his aspirations to the beautiful and true,  
 Were developed and exercised  
 Through a life of vicissitude,  
 And often of privation and disappointment. /

As a public lecturer  
He has left a lasting memorial  
In the minds of the many  
Whom he guided to a perception  
Of the genius of Shakspeare  
In its diversified and harmonizing powers.  
At oppression and hypocrisy  
He spurned with a force proportioned  
To that wherewith he clung  
To justice and freedom, kindness, and sincerity.  
Ever prompt for generous toil,  
He won for himself from the world  
Only the poet's dowry,  
“ The hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
The love of love ! ”

This eloquent and comprehensive epitaph is his history. His health was failing when in a crowded room in Great Charles Street he read Fox's "Lecture on Class Moralities," which were then being delivered in South Place Chapel, London. No Sunday evening readings had been heard in Birmingham before. Since Pemberton's day I have heard hundreds of lecturers and preachers in England and America, but never one who had the animation, the inspiration, and the spontaneous variety he had. He came into the lecture-room like a flash of light, and the hearer saw new things ever after by it. He was of the people, and *for* the people, and owed all his powers to himself.

One of the men of mark, who, though not conspicuous on the platform of the Political Union, was William Pare—an organizing power on the side of insurgent opinion, and a member of the Town Council. Societies for the diffusion of Christian knowledge professedly took charge of the affairs of another world. Lord Brougham formed the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge—an entirely new sort of knowledge not recognized then, which had relation to the affairs of this world. He sent Mr. Coates to Birmingham to arrange the establishment of a mechanics' institution in the town. It was Mr. Pare mainly who carried out this intent. In all municipal enterprises and improvement Pare was foremost. He had an assuring voice, the genius of enthusiasm, which won others to unity, and made no enemies. He was appointed the first Registrar under the Act legalizing civil marriages, but as he was an advocate of Mr. Owen's views, the Bishop of Exeter brought his name

before the House of Lords, which led to Mr. Pare resigning that office. He was afterwards largely engaged as a railway statist in connection with the construction of railways, and subsequently as managing partner in The Irish Engineering Company of Seville Iron Works, Dublin, and resided at Clontarf. He was the Governor of Queenwood Community, established by Owen's disciples in Hampshire. He preserved his youthful animation to a good age, and his fidelity to the social and co-operative movement, and was the best representative of the philosophical principles of Robert Owen of all his disciples. His angerless voice never varied in the most conflicting counsel, and he was pacific without being passive. He was considerate to the erring, and at the same time energetic against error. He had two qualities which seldom go together—advocacy and organization. I was one of the first persons married in his office, intending to testify in favour of civil marriage, though the prosaicness of the arrangement provided by the Act inspired me with resentment. No bright chamber, hall, or temple, to give distinction to the ceremony ; only the business office of a Registrar of Deaths, infusing funeral associations into a wedding. Civil marriage had become a necessity ; but it was made as uninteresting as it could be, to drive persons back to church. It was the hope that Mr. Pare would officiate reconciled me to it, and imparted distinction to it in my mind.

## CHAPTER X.

### *NATURE OF THE MIDLAND MIND.*

(1830-6.)

THE Midland mind is necessarily provincial. Provincial is not a good term, as the counties are not subjugated districts. I use the word provincial because there is none other which designates the compeers of the capital, the dwellers in the open land of plain and mountain. There is a common impression that the provincial mind is of a lower type than the metropolitan. This arises from overlooking that the London mind has brightness where the provincial mind has strength. Londoners are the lapidaries of the nation. They polish the diamond found in the counties, and sometimes, if no one challenges them, they take credit for producing the jewel. If any one could take out of the metropolitan mind all knowledge, thought, conjecture, imagination, and poetry, which it has secreted from provincial thinkers, many minds would be light as the shell when the egg is out. London abounds in egg-shell minds ; nevertheless, it has other minds of a noble order. The mark of metropolitanism is the mastery of many views. London is latitudinarian without which there is no tolerance.

One great advantage of provincial life is the opportunity of originality. There, originality can be seen by reason of its separateness. The provincial mind is the spring land of the nation. The metropolis is but the confluence of its many streams. Though the metropolis has the merit of attracting them, their origin is elsewhere. London is the mirror of the counties, where every provincial man of genius who looks into it, sees his own face. Still the provincial mind has the dis-

advantage of a fixed eye. It sees clearly what is before it, and nothing escapes it within its own range, but it sees little beyond and nothing around it. It does not ignore excellence in others : it does not know of it. Ignoring implies knowing and intentional disregard. The tendency of the provincial mind is not only not to know, its tendency is not to believe in anything but itself. Its secret opinion is that nature exhausted herself in bestowing upon the provincial mind the ideas it has, and that other persons, who profess to know something, are unconscious impostors, being unaware that all true conceptions were otherwise distributed before they applied for them. If this be not so, the provincial mind often gives this impression of itself. Any observer of local politics frequently sees a citizen arise who supposes himself to know everything from the beginning and previously. One day he finds himself a member of the Town Council, and confronted by forty or fifty gentlemen each under precisely the same impression of his own attainments. Then the all-knowing citizen is dismayed at the skill required and the delay which intervenes before he obtains ascendency for his views there. If it come to pass that the same aspirant enters Parliament, he finds himself face to face with six hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen, each privately convinced that he alone has the right idea of the government of the world. Then he is amazed at the art, tact, eloquence, patience, and resource necessary to overcome the representative and concentrated obstinacy which he encounters in that assembly. I have watched a hundred men in the House of Commons of just and strong ambition, grow pale with dying purpose as they stepped into that wilderness of infallibility, when the fierce blasts of contrariety of opinion first beat upon them. They were discouraged when they discovered how slowly the mill of the gods grind—when they have to turn the wheels. Many leaders who have awakened the courage and hope of the provinces have been the first to feel discouraged in Parliament, and what was worse to propagate discouragement. The one advantage of the Parliamentary mind is that it has, like a lighthouse, a revolving eye. It sees all the country around. Hence Parliament awaits events with an unamazed expectancy. It is never disconcerted and never despairs. It knows that common consent to the right is a pursuit of infinite labour and infinite worth, and that

victory comes with facts, time, and persistence. Its art is impartiality, its strategy is patience, its grace is deference, and its strength toleration. It is wise not by its own wisdom, but by wisdom acquired in winning honest concurrence.

It was not till I began to notice these varying characteristics of local and metropolitan life that it was possible to understand what persistence of effort is necessary in propagandism, or to encounter without surprise the natural obstacles in the way of a new conviction, and the resentments which are awakened by the attempt to create it.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *WIDER VIEWS.*

(1837.)

REVERENCE for excellence I always had. It was not called forth or cultivated—it came to me like a sense. No book of etiquette was needed to teach me how to act towards those whom I had reason to regard. I used to walk home with my tutor to the other end of the town on dark nights, though less able than he to defend myself, if attacked on my return alone.

Mr. Daniel Wright had been the tutor of C. R. Pemberton, already mentioned, and a greater Shakspearian critic than any other actor before his time. Pemberton said to me "he owed more to Daniel Wright than to any man, save his own father." I might, in my turn, say the same of Mr. Wright, who gave me advice as to the conduct of life, and Mr. Hawkes Smith, to whom Mr. Wright commended me, did also—advice which was only in the minds of Unitarian thinkers, and of which no other religious body in Birmingham had knowledge or took interest. Mr. Wright was at one time partner with Thomas Clutton Salt, a colleague of Thomas Attwood, with whom he was associated in founding the famous Birmingham Political Union, which contributed so much to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. The place of business of Salt and Wright was at the corner of Paradise Street, on the spot on which the Town Hall now stands. Mr. Wright was a man immovable in a cause he believed to be just. He had a lawsuit with his partner. He won his cause but lost his capital. When the Mechanics' Institution was formed, he was appointed tutor. Mr. Wright,

more cultivated than his partner, had the manners of a gentleman, and his wide knowledge was of a kind always ready for use. He was about fifty when I became one of his pupils. He was of middle stature, strongly built, his face was pallid ; you could scarcely see that it was pock-marked. His manner was grave and silent, showing the sense of misfortune and fortitude. All who spoke of him in the town did it with sympathy and respect.

In 1839, an exhibition of machinery and art manufactures was held in the Shakspeare Rooms, New Street. It was said that Prince Albert had in view to promote an International Exhibition (which was held eleven years later) should this experiment excite distinctive public interest. Some machines of remarkable delicacy of action were supplied by Lieutenant Lecount. Application was made to Mr. Wright to recommend some student at the Mechanics' Institution, who, with assistants he might select, would explain the various objects to visitors. Mr. Wright recommended me, and I undertook the duty. One day Sir Robert Peel came, Prince Albert and other persons of distinction visited the exhibition, Lieut. Lecount came down daily. He was a short man and wore a rough sea jacket. He had served in the navy under Constantine Moorson, and spoke with pride of a battle in which he had been engaged with him. He was liable to fainting fits, and when they were coming on he would crouch down among the machinery against the wall, telling me not to regard him, and when he recovered he rose and continued his survey. He was spoken of as "the mathematician of the London and Birmingham Railway," as he was engaged in its construction. At that time the Rev. Timothy East, a saintly and popular preacher, to whose gentle tones and fierce expressions I was oft a listener—who ranked next to the Rev. J. Angell James in his reputation in the town, was accustomed to call at the railway office. As well as "mansions in the skies," Mr. East had shares in the railway, which Lecount thought incompatible with his spiritual pretensions. Not knowing the lieutenant, and seeing him in his rough attire, Mr. East took him to be a porter, and called out, "Hold my horse." Lecount replied with a naval oath of rotund quality and explosive as a shell—being provoked by the superciliousness in the preacher's tone, which offended Lecount's self-respect. Mr. East com-

plained of the singular behaviour of "the man at the door," when he was told that he had addressed Lieutenant Lecount, who was a French gentleman of official distinction and of great attainments. Mr. East excused himself for his mistake, and regretted that his many acquirements did not include a little civility among them. Lecount, under the name of Dr. P. Y., wrote a book of note at the time, which was published by my friend, Henry Hetherington, entitled "A Hunt After the Devil." There was little of that person in the book, which was filled with mathematical calculations, remarkably identical with those which Bishop Colenso afterwards made, of the dimensions of the ark and of its inadequacy to contain a ten thousandth part of the inmates which we are informed entered it.

One morning, which I shall never forget, my tutor came down in his friendly way to see how I was getting on in my new employment. He shook hands at the entrance with Captain Van Burl, who was treasurer of the exhibition, and died as he was doing so. We laid him in one of the rooms, and it was hours after before I could persuade myself that he was dead. Through his influence I had made many friends, whose wider views in religion enlarged my own. As the Mechanics' Institution could not at once replace Mr. Wright, the committee appointed me to conduct the classes for a time. Some of the students in whom Mr. Wright had taken interest became afterwards distinguished—among them was Dr. J. A. Langford.

Mr. Wright was buried in the Old Meeting House Yard, where his pupils and friends placed a tablet over his grave. Dr. Langford published in his "Century of Birmingham Life" a graceful and grateful tribute which he wrote in his memory. Two of the stanzas celebrate Mr. Wright's charm of manner, whether his subject was Shakspeare, Euclid, or Truth.

"As thou the poet's glorious strain,  
Or Euclid's problems didst explain.

Thy eyes with loving-kindness bright,  
More brightly beam, as beamed the light,  
Of truth in minds so dear to thee  
As all thy pupils were."

Through my friend Mr. Hawkes Smith I was invited to teach a class in the Unitarian Sunday School at the new Meeting

House, locally known as Dr. Priestley's Chapel, of which the Rev. Mr. Kentish was then the chief preacher. The Sunday School had classes for the study of logic and mathematics—the Unitarians alone gave such instruction on the Sunday. But I retained all the time my Trinitarian belief with which they never interfered. The Rev. William Crompton, whose sister Mr. George Dawson subsequently married, once asked me if I remained Trinitarian in belief. I answered that I did. A vague impression existed in my mind that three Gods were not too many to attend to the affairs of this vast universe.<sup>1</sup> Contemporaneous in the town was a Rev. Dr. Brindley, a school-master who was to the Church party what Busfield Ferrand was to the Tory party, who used to attack Cobden and Bright in the Anti-Corn Law agitation ; and Brindley was like Ferrand in personal appearance, in coarseness, fury of speech, and lust for notoriety. He first came forward, and delivered a course of lectures in reply to George Combe, whose phrenological views he represented as being highly hostile to Christianity. The idea of intelligence being manifested under material conditions, and subject to material laws, had not then entered into the theological mind. Mr. Hawkes Smith delivered a course of lectures in vindication of Combe, when Brindley's incapacity was made patent to the town. With the adroitness of a robust controversialist, he retaliated by attacking Mr. Hawkes Smith for his Socialistic views, where the sympathy of religious prejudice in favour of his new assault would conceal his intellectual deficiencies. Mr. Hawkes Smith was known for his intrepid defence of Robert Owen's social views, which sought the improvement of human condition by human means. Mr. Wright had taught his pupils that all opinion should be tested by reason, so we were uninfluenced by Dr. Brindley, and as he defamed Mr. Hawkes Smith, whom we all had reason to regard, many of us began to inquire into the validity of Mr. Owen's

<sup>1</sup> The three typical men in Birmingham, at that time, were G. F. Muntz, before named ; Mr. John Cadbury, the founder of the cocoa making firm—a white-headed, nimble, well-built Quaker, who wore drab breeches and white silk stockings, which well displayed a fine pair of calves which were the admiration of the streets, of which the owner seemed conscious ; and Mr. Crompton, a sheet copper merchant, father of the minister (Rev. W. Crompton) whom I have named. He was a bright, handsome man of refined expression, with delicate colour in his cheeks, the most gentlemanly man who came to business in Broad Street. I met him twice a day for thirteen years.

views, tested by the light of reason and experience. It appeared to me that the practical outcome of these Socialist views was to supersede the coercion of wrongdoers by removing the causes which led to mischievous action, and extinguish the ignorance which led to erroneous opinion. A memorable passage of Coleridge, the greatest thinker among theologians of his day, which described the quality of mind in this class of Socialists, made a strong impression upon me. It was this—

“Accustomed to regard all the affairs of men as a process, they never hurry, and they never pause. Theirs is not a twilight of political knowledge which gives just light enough to place one foot before the other : as they advance the scene still opens upon them. Convinced that vice originates not in the man, but in the surrounding circumstances—not in the heart, but in the understanding—they are hopeless concerning no one. By endeavouring to alter the circumstances they would remove, or by strengthening the intellect disarm temptation.”

Afterwards I was induced to hear Robert Owen, who came to address his partizans in Allison Street Rooms. Eventually I took part in discussions there. Sometimes I selected the Evening Lessons and read them. As I selected from various authors passages I cared for, and read them as though I cared for the sentiments, it caused me to be frequently requested to officiate in that way, and ultimately to give some short lectures. In 1837, I went one night with Mr. Hollick to deliver an address in Kidderminster, and slept at an inn where, the bed being over the brewery, the steam came through the floor, and I remember being very damp in the morning, but not being chilled I took no harm.

Never doubting that other persons had a right to differ from me, it never entered my mind to resent it, but in the Brindley controversy I found theological persons did resent difference from them. While Mr. Hawkes Smith was delivering his lectures in defence of phrenology and the influence of circumstance on character, Mr. Brindley twisted on his seat, made faces as though he wished to divert attention from the arguments of the speaker, and otherwise treated difference of opinion as a defect of morality, without incurring the disapprobation of his Christian supporters, which made me less proud than I had been to be counted on their side. For myself I could

hardly be said to differ from anybody, but looked at things in my own way, and as I conceived no one to be under obligation to take my view, I felt myself under no obligation to take theirs. When, however, the conflicts mentioned subsided, it did seem an obligation to improve the material condition of others, if it could be done. This impression was confirmed in various ways, and under the influence of incidents which I may elsewhere recount. Thus, in addition to the persuasion I had of the usefulness of piety, was added the conviction of the piety of usefulness.

Mr. Brindley had industry and tact, and was right in some of his objections to Socialism. Had he been actuated by the desire of directing those of that opinion wisely, and of making such intention felt, he might have rendered service to them and the public.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *BYWAY TRAGEDIES.*

(1837.)

#### I.

SOMETIMES a man may engage in actual tragedies, under a political despotism for instance, there being apparently to him no other extrication from an unendurable state of things. He foresees then what may come to him in consequence. In so far as he acts from a clear sense of duty he casts his lot with uncertain Fortune, and does not repine when it goes against him. To foresee, in the language of Byron, that

“The block may soak your gore,  
Your head may sodden in the sun ; your limbs  
Be strung to city gates and castle walls,”

is not a fine outlook, nor a pleasant future to contemplate. It is all very grand in the blank verse of Marino Faliero, but that mode of figuring on “castle walls” is quite a different thing ; especially if some critical historian comes after you and gives it as his opinion that you did it all “for notoriety.”

Sometimes a man may step into what is of the nature of a tragedy and not know it ; or an event may come to him with death in its coils, but which does not pass for tragedy because death plays only a silent part in it. These affairs occur in daily life more frequently than is thought, and it appears to me that there is no station in society in which education in heroism or fortitude in youth may not be serviceable in after life.

One day when I was eighteen, a young Lichfield girl came into my workshop to speak to a relative—a relative by kindness

rather than by blood, as she was kinless. She had a gipsy kind of beauty, but with an instinctive shyness not common with that tribe. As I looked up at her, the sunlight was pouring into the place. As she stood between two windows, she seemed transparent. The crimson rays seemed to pass through her hands and face. Carbon dust was flying about, and most objects were grim around, which perhaps rendered more noticeable the ruddiness and freshness of the girl. I had never seen anything like it. Little did I think that sight would never go out of my mind. For two years I sought her company as a lover. Always diffident myself, unless some sense of duty dissipated the feeling, I was a very unengaging though not unpersistent suitor. No art or entreaty of mine ever won her voluntary society for a single stroll. Partly from hopelessness of success and partly from having been taught enough at the Mechanics' Institution to make me aware how little I knew, I determined to give myself to learning what I could for some time. That my desistance from my suit might relieve the Zingara from the inconvenience of my assiduities, I wrote to her and explained the resolution I had taken. Unhappy hour when I sent that letter. I see every article in the room in which I stood when I wrote it. No answer resulted, but two Sundays later—the sun was again shining in the street—she came to the door of the house where I was and asked for me, and, when I went there, she, scarcely glancing at me, held out the open letter, let it drop from her hand, and leaving it went away. She could not in words ask me to take it back—but in this mute and maidenly way she did it—and I knew it, yet feared and deferred to act upon the unforeseen signs. Impelled by the fascination of a new misery which so often carries us along when we cannot avert it, or fathom the future, I went out and walked in silence by her side to the gate of the cottage where she resided. I never saw her again until she was dying. Ambition, albeit not an unworthy one, had hardened my mind, but not so as to make me insensible to the happiness of another. The desire to know had not cast all other sentiments out of my heart, and I was sorry I had formed my purpose. Had I known what pain came to her by my act, I would not have done it. Had I known the consequence, I would not have done it. My motive and conduct were without the range of her knowledge,

and no doubt appeared as an excuse merely for concealing a changed interest in her. Yet so far as I had known she had none in me, and probably she did not know it either—until my parting letter reached her. Had I any knowledge of the incertitude of a girl's heart, oft unknown to herself, I might have won her consent to delay. But I had no experience, no skill. Intellectual ignorance had become insupportable to me, yet I had in my own mind only to make a sacrifice of pleasure for my own improvement—not sacrifice another. No distinction to be won atones for that. Had I been capable of reasoning upon my duty, I should have seen that, since I had sought the girl's love, I was bound to regard it when I discovered that I had succeeded. A small china, acorn-shaped jewel, which belonged to her mother (to whom it was a fatal gift of love), was given me after her death. I do not lose it. I do not look at it. Busy streets now cover the site of sandhills and trees where I had first seen her walk. Not far away still stands the fence of the cottage garden where we last parted. But never more do I walk there. After years of absence, my road may pass through the place. But no lapse of time, nor day nor night, make any difference. As soon as I am there, houses and streets and friends with me disappear as though they were not, and the trees, sandbanks, the bright broad roadway, and sunshine come back. The old cottage stands there again just as I saw it fifty years ago, and the silent, tremulous, tearful little beauty is turning to go in. Happy years of love have since succeeded. Remorse has never mingled therewith, because there was no intention of wrong in my mind. But the past is still a pain. At times I dream that I go out to meet the winsome figure coming down a glade. The crimson sunlight is again upon her. Darkness comes—a river is running at my feet, and I cannot pass over it. I turn to seek means of crossing it—and awake. We never meet. Another time I dream that my long self-set task of study is accomplished. My heart is joyous, I walk until I come in sight of a familiar cottage amid trees. I pass the fence. I open the door. The fire is burning—the kettle is singing—flowers are in the window. I enter—the chairs are all empty, the little round table has nothing on it. She is in the next room. I watch and wait for the opening of the door. I listen—there is no one stirring nor rustle over-

head. There is no voice. There is nobody there. I understand it all—and awake, glad that my imagination is touched with sympathy and not with guilt.

## II.

There are a class of tragedies which come to you and spread their shadows about you in which you have no natural lot or part.

A pretty young girl was on a visit at my house, I having often been the guest of her parents. A colleague of mine, oft calling upon me, came thus to see her and conceived affection for her. Soon after her return home, St. Valentine's Day came, when she received one of that saint's missives—in this case an offensive little picture such as silly persons oft delight to send at that time to annoy or mystify young lovers. As it came from London, and no one there whom the young girl knew of was likely to send her a valentine of any kind save my friend, she unhappily concluded that it came from him. They were but slightly acquainted, and, after the way of country girls, she probably had misgivings as to whether her town admirer might not look down upon her. She imagined the valentine was meant to deride her, and that she had been played with, and imposed upon by insincere professions of regard. By another post there came openly and avowedly a true valentine, which would have charmed her exceedingly had she been able to believe in it. Thinking it also had come from her double-minded suitor, she returned it. While the propriety of doing so was being discussed by her sisters, none having discernment to doubt whether both could have come from one who had never been open to a suspicion of insincerity—one of the sisters in her excitement upset the ink pot over the true valentine, and as it had been determined to return it, it was returned in that state. Being received by her lover again with this mark of indignity or neglect upon it, he in his turn imagined he was indeed rejected. Before this arrived, he had written to the young lady's father the kind of letter which a gentleman unknown to him would write, giving him references, and asking his permission to pay his addresses to his daughter, in whom he had become interested during her visit to London. No answer

ever came, which confirmed him in his impression that the returned valentine implied his dismissal. Thus correspondence ceased on both sides. A month later the letter to the father came back to the lover. By a fatal mischance, such as often waits on lovers, he had directed the letter to the wrong town (to Manchester instead of to Sheffield), having no familiarity with the parts where she lived, and it lay undelivered in the Dead Letter Office until the Post Office returned it to the writer. What happiness that letter would have brought to the household for which it was intended had it been delivered ! The returned valentine made him hesitate what to do, and he did nothing.

Here was as pretty a dramatic combination of misadventures in love as any one need wish to meet with ; and if all ended here it was an affair to laugh over. But, alas, there was death in it. Before the day of unravelment came, opportunity occurred to my friend, the mystified lover, to renew his acquaintance with another whose affection he had once unsuccessfully sought. Some time after it came to pass that I was again a guest in the house where lived my former visitor who received the double valentines. I found the pretty flower of the household drooping. The old brightness was dimmed, the old gaiety had departed. It had then become known to them that the mischief-making valentine had been the act of a silly phrenologist, who had been a guest in the house, and who had sent it to London to be posted there in order to perplex the recipient. That act killed the girl. We wished that all the bumps of that idiotic phrenologist had been reduced to powder, and scattered to the winds, before that trick got into his spurious brains. A new embroglie followed in an unsuspected way. To vindicate the sincerity of my London friend, and to show that when my host's daughter was entrusted to my care she had not become acquainted with one who was not a man of honour—I related to what effect he had written to her father, and how his letter came back through misdirection. This knowledge unhappily made the disappointment sharper and more real. In the end I was asked to decide what should be done. Had I possessed common sense, I should have made reply, saying, “It was altogether an affair for the elders in Israel, and not for a young man unskilled in affairs of this kind, where only experience

could see its way." It is clearly a fault to be ready to take other people's troubles upon you and relieve them from the necessity of thinking for themselves. As the unhappy acquaintanceship commenced when my host's daughter was my guest, it appeared to me that I ought to do something to amend matters, if that were possible. When I related to my friend in London the facts, he very honourably said that, although his thoughts were turned elsewhere, he would marry my visitor if I said he ought. I conferred with her mother. Had I been called upon to solve a problem in Euclid, I could have done it : but I had never had time to study the casuistry of love, and had small skill therein. It seemed to me that to offer the young thing a second-hand heart, which had been twice enthralled by another, might prove hereafter an ill gift. A hand tendered as it were by command and not spontaneously and gladly offered, did that mean happiness in the future ? Could a mother advise her child to venture upon that ? The child most concerned would say nothing. Love is diffident and also proud, and will not ask what it is ready to offer its life for if presented to it. This I did not sufficiently understand. So it was agreed that the poor lost thing had better forget her London love. Whether she could forget it was quite another thing. If such a duty befell me again, I should put very different questions from those I put then. Then I did not know that an honourable man can find happiness in a marriage of duty, where he is sure of abounding love for himself. My decision brought a new cloud over my path. Long after I saw that I should not have accepted any responsibility in the matter ; that what I ought to have done was simply to say to my friend, "Go and see the girl yourself. The decision lies between yourselves." In an interview love and honour would find a wiser issue than any philosophy or prudence could devise. During the thirty years in which I have oft again been a visitor at the house of the parents of the girl, the shadow of that death meets me at the fireside. Over the mantlepiece hangs the pretty face which the grave has so long held. The mother, whose force of character amounted to distinction, speaks a few words in accents which no other sorrow ever extorts from her. The mischievous knave who sent the fatal valentine what must he think, if he has a nature to be pierced

by remorse? My friend whose ill-fate it was to come in the poor child's path, when he has walked the deck of a Cape sea-ship at night, must oft have seen in the shrouds a sweet, slender figure, with a sad, pale face, glide away as he looked up: and doubtless he has many a time wandered in his dreams to a strange Hallamshire grave where the young light of life was extinguished in a hapless and hopeless love.

Among her papers sent to me after her death are the following verses. I possess them still. They are in her own handwriting. They are probably a copy of lines which expressed only too well her own feelings and fate. They were the last words she wrote:—

“ I've pressed my last kiss on thy brow,  
I've breathed my last farewell,  
And hushed within my breaking heart  
The love I may not tell.

I sought to win thee for mine own,  
To wear thee in my heart,  
That dream is o'er—I leave thee now,  
And bless thee as we part.

Thy low sweet tones are in my ear,  
Where'er my footsteps roam,  
And pleasant memories of the past  
Will make my heart their home.

And when my bark, now passion-tossed  
Upon life's wintry sea,  
Shall sink beneath the stormy wave,  
Wilt thou not weep for me?

Farewell! I may not pause to gaze  
Into those eyes of thine—  
Heaven spare thy heart the agony  
That now is rending mine.”

Afterwards nothing happened to soften the memory of the silent tragedy which found its way to my hearth. In this world where real sorrow is pretty copious and any one with susceptibility meets with more than enough, few tragedies are worth the telling. Neither on the stage nor in books is it often excusable to produce them. Were it not that in the two instances given here the reader may learn some wisdom how to act in like cases—wisdom hidden from the actors in them, and

which, had it been possessed by them, might have prevented the tragedies happening—I would not relate them.

In 1850 commenced the *People's Review*, of which the illustrated cover, printed in colours, was designed and its vignettes executed by W. J. Linton, whose skilful and generous pencil was always at the service of his friends. So far as I remember it was the first sixpenny review issued. It was edited by "Friends of Order and Progress," and he of whom I have spoken in the preceding narrative was one of the "Friends" who joined me in conducting it. He afterwards became a recognized journalist, and an authority in military literature of which he had then no knowledge, which was entirely out of his experience, and for which we did not suppose he had any taste, which speaks all the more for his versatility, capacity, and powers of application.

### III.

Other experiences, tragical though unobtrusive, occur in a varying career, without personal instruction in them, save so far as their relation prevents others feeling surprise whom they may befall.

It will come to pass that what you most desire and have long looked for, you never see. All the while it lies near you—by your side. But a gossamer veil, a mere spider web, woven by the imagination, so thin that you might blow it away if you thought to do it—yet just enough to hide from you what your eyes covet to behold, and you know it not. You may be concerned in catastrophes which, like storms that dash down sea walls, or like winds which rend forest trees, spreading desolation around you, and yet they never disturb that fragile, all-concealing veil. Oftener than the unreflecting or unsensitive imagine this form of fate happens. Duty itself often subjects men to this silent destiny, which requires as much heroism to confront as open war, and more courage to endure than hostile defeat. I have seen those who, on comprehending what had occurred to them, were never the same afterwards. Pursuits of business, or pursuits of the mind, effaced the sense of the loss for a time, but at the first disengaged interval it recurred. It was as though a supernatural visitant stood always at the door of the mind, and the moment it was, as it were, on the latch, it was opened,

and the visitant came in. When occupation again begins, it seems to go out again. You bar the door, but you know it is still standing there. In daily life, there are cries, though no sound is heard by others ; there are tragedies, though no one is observed to be killed.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *FOURTEEN NIGHTS WITH GEORGE COMBE.*

(1838.)

FIFTY years ago morality seemed stagnant. There were ripples of controversy on technical points in theology, and no one threw any new light over the monotonous plain of orthodox thought, when a work was announced entitled "The Constitution of Man," by George Combe. It was welcomed among students as the new Gospel of Practical Ethics. The title was one of promise, the style was clear, the thought innovative ; it used accepted terms of theology, and endowed them with modern significance. It based morality on natural law, and the mind of no theologian remained the same after reading it. I felt as much interest in seeing the author of "The Constitution of Man" as I should in seeing the writer of the "Arabian Nights." One evening in May, 1838, Mr. William Hawkes Smith, already mentioned, the chief advocate of social thought in Birmingham, put into my hands the prospectus of a course of "Fourteen Lectures on Phrenology, to be delivered by George Combe, of Edinburgh, in the theatre of the Philosophical Institution." I was told Mr. Combe wanted an assistant. Mr. Hawkes Smith having made fruitless applications, applied to my class-mate, Frederick Hollick, who had the brightest mind of any student in the Mechanics' Institution. He, with a frugal insight of the ways of the world—supernatural compared with mine—said, "Very well ; but on what terms ? Fourteen nights abstracted from my studies will be a manifest loss." Mr. Smith, who had no instruction as to "terms," shook his head, and said, "Well, I must try Holyoake."

To me he came. To speak of money in relation to the

author of "The Constitution of Man" seemed to me a desecration, and I at once assented to be at his command. Hollick had learned that no enthusiasm, however intense, could live upon nothing. He was, in that respect, of the opinion of Falstaff. "There lies glory, but here stand I," and had no taste for growing thin on praise. I had watched the asteroids from the roof of the Eagle Foundry during cold nights of November, from six in the evening to eight o'clock in the morning—from Sunday to Wednesday, and no cessation of my daily work was provided for. This I had done for the Philosophical Institution, and thought myself rich in their vote of thanks (being philosophers, it did not occur to them that anything else was necessary); while, out of my small earnings, I paid for medicine for myself and a coadjutor whom I had seduced into these profitless, perilous, nocturnal, cold-giving, but delightful watchings. We all had several colds. Hollick was one of the watchers, but he never more became my meteorological comrade. My not hinting at payment was an advantage in Mr. Combe's eyes, being one of those whom "in England, Ireland, Scotland, North America, and Germany" he sought, as afterwards appeared.

On May 31, 1838, Mr. Hawkes Smith introduced me to Mr. Combe, saying friendly words as to what he believed to be my intelligence and fitness; whereupon I said, "These kindly assurances are not necessary in Mr. Combe's case, as he, by a more certain process, can judge himself of my suitability." Upon this I took off my hat (we were standing in the doorway of the ante-room), Mr. Combe, smiling, passed his hand over my head, and said he was "sure that I should suit him well." This being settled scientifically, I appeared for fourteen nights in the lecture-room as Mr. Combe's assistant. I was given to understand that the lectures would occupy, as in Edinburgh, but one hour; but it happened that, including attendance before and after the lectures, I was occupied nearly four hours each night. In addition, I attended a short course of morning manipulations. On the 5th of June he presented me with his "Elements of Phrenology" (the 3s. 6d. edition, with an autograph inscription), which I still possess. He said it would better enable me to assist him. At the conclusion he presented me with an old bust, by De Ville, with the nose broken off,

which would not go into his box, but which I valued, as coming from him, more than any other bust with the nose on, and that would go into a box.

On the morning of his final departure from Birmingham for America, I went down to the Philosophical Institution to bid him farewell, and there witnessed, for the first time, one man kiss another. Bally, who was formerly with Spurzheim, had come to Birmingham with Combe. He seemed much attached to Mr. Combe, and always professed the highest regard for him. They stood together in the passage of the institution, when Bally, to my astonishment, and apparently to Mr. Combe's, threw his arms round him as though he was going to carry him into the cab, but instead of which he pressed his Swiss lips to Combe's orange cheeks, and perpetrated a series of kisses. I, who was unacquainted with the continental custom of men kissing each other, was confused and amazed.

Several of my personal friends had attended Mr. Combe's lectures, and subscribed to the piece of plate presented to him at the conclusion of the course. Some of them said, by way of curiosity, "What did he give you for your services, Holyoake?" I answered, "Nothing; I did not expect anything!" "That's strange," they said. The Mechanics' Institution had, during four weeks, given up their usual lecture nights for Mr. Combe's convenience, which induced them to think they had some claim upon him for a lecture for the benefit of their building fund. Mr. Combe declined to accede thereto. Mr. John Lowther Murphy, a member of the committee, proposed to write to the *Birmingham Journal* upon the subject, and asked me to do so too. To this I objected, saying, "No man was to be censured for not being generous." As Mr. Combe had carried away an excellent purse from Birmingham, Mr. Hawkes Smith was induced by others to write to Mr. Combe respecting me. Subsequently he told me that Mr. Combe had written from Bristol to say "I had no claim upon him, and, moreover, that I had imperfectly held up the casts in the lecture-room." That he should assume I had no claim upon him I was content, but to say I had assisted him badly I thought mean; and, besides, it was not true; for at parting he distinctly assured me that I "had suited him well." I consulted my tutor, Mr.

Wright, who said, "Send a letter to Mr. Combe, and put yourself right with him." In the meantime, Mr. Combe had gone to America. Mr. Vallance, a young merchant who was cognizant of the whole transaction, volunteered to take my letter to Mr. Combe, and, finding him at Boston, stepped up to him one night after a lecture, saying he "was the bearer of a letter from Mr. Holyoake, of Birmingham, who would be glad of a reply from him."

The letter stated in respectful terms that "his complaint of the nature of my service came very late, as, had he made intimation of it earlier in the fourteen nights during which I had served him, he would not have seen any more of me. As his disparagement was not consistent with what he had said to me on leaving, I was anxious to assure him that I had never applied for remuneration, directly or indirectly, or complained to any one of not having received any. It was some of his own friends who thought I had a right to some payment." It was eight years before I received any reply to my letter.

All that time I carried a copy of the letter about with me, intending to re-deliver it myself if I should fall in with Mr. Combe. It was Wednesday, January 7, 1846, before this happened. Being then in Glasgow, I found that Dr. Andrew Combe was to deliver the inaugural address of the Chair of Phrenology which he had founded in the Andersonian University. As Dr. Combe was in declining health, the probability was that his brother would officiate in his place; and so it proved. The theatre of the Andersonian University is, as much as need be, like an oven in appearance, and when filled it has the other quality of being an oven in fact. Nevertheless, I was in that oven on that day. In those days, most young men who read outside the Bible had some passage of Byron in their minds. One that had impressed me began—

" If we do but watch the hour  
There never yet was human power"—

that could evade those who had persistence enough to wait and watch. At the precise moment announced, my identical long-sought friend George Combe walked on to the platform. At the conclusion of his address I went down to him and said, "Mr. Combe, you will remember me as Mr. Holyoake, who

assisted you during your lectures in Birmingham. I have a letter to give you, which I have waited eight years for an opportunity of putting into your hands. You will oblige me by an answer." He knew my voice again ; he took my letter with the air of a man who had an inconvenient recollection awakened. He did reply on the 13th, in which he said that "in the whole course of his experience in lecturing in England, Ireland, Scotland, North America, and Germany, I was the only assistant who ever hinted that he expected any pecuniary remuneration." As I never had "hinted" this, and the letter before him expressly said so, Mr. Combe was plainly in error. He had probably overlooked my disclaimer. He added, "No one who does not interest himself in the work so as to consider it an advantage to himself to execute it, makes a desirable assistant to a lecturer on phrenology." But where the assisted gains and the assister loses, participation in equity were not unseemly. There must, therefore, be an organ in "desirable" young men which Mr. Combe had not put in his craniological map, namely, the organ of assist-for-nothingness. Mr. Combe further said that "the events of my connection with him he could not recall at that distance of time, and if he unsaid anything he had said, it would be contradicting himself without any consciousness of being in error ; but he assured me sincerely nothing remained in his recollection the least injurious to me as having occurred at the lectures." There ended the matter, as that assurance was satisfactory. In acknowledging his letter, I expressed my appreciation of his efforts on behalf of phrenological philosophy, which threw a new light on human character, in which every man was interested, and by which every man was advantaged. An extract from a diary which I kept in those days shows what took place between me and Mr. Combe at the time of his lectures in Birmingham.

"Attended on Mr. Combe. After his lecture I showed him the book of Euclid which I had written out, with the diagrams which I had made with sheet iron compasses of my own construction, and also some propositions of my own which I deduced and demonstrated from Euclid. He said 'they were highly creditable to me and neatly done, and that to comprehend all the parts of a complicated proposition I must have a strong organ of form. Those,' he said, 'who were deficient in

form could take in only a part of a diagram at a time, and while doing that forgot the other.' 'Size,' he said, 'enabled me to determine what space to allot to a diagram, and to adopt that size of letter in writing which made it possible for me to say what I had to say in the space available.' This has always been easy to me. 'Individuality,' he said, 'gave the power to recollect the parts and references in propositions. He added that 'I had causality considerable,' and explained to me 'what organs were necessary in mathematics, geometry, and arithmetic.' On another evening, when attending him in the ante-room before the lecture, as he selected the different busts he wanted me to produce to the audience, he explained to me why phrenologists declined to discuss with opponents. 'If,' said he, 'a man were to ask, Have you a nose on your face? what should you say? Why, look. So it is with phrenology—it is founded on facts. We say to opponents, Look to these facts. I never ask any one to believe phrenology. I tell what it is, and people may do as they please about believing it. Discussion can establish no fact; observation must do this.'"

I always counted these conversations as an advantage to me.

At that time, phrenology being new, it was a subject of much interest to myself, Dr. Hollick, and other fellow-students, and we procured the heads of animals in order to acquire definite ideas of craniology. Wishing to verify what I could, I had asked Mr. Combe questions concerning myself. He said "I was of the Nervous Lymphatic Temperament" (it would have been better for my peace had I been more lymphatic), and that I "had the organs of Locality large." Up to that time I found my way about very well by observation, but afterwards, trusting to Mr. Combe's assurance that I had Locality, I ordinarily took the wrong road.

My estimate of Mr. Combe has never changed—that he was the greatest expositor of phrenology who has arisen. He did for it what Dr. Paley did for theology by his design argument; but Combe, no more than Paley, invented his argument, and both would have stood higher in the estimation of their readers had they owned what they owed to their predecessors. Many adversaries never gave Combe credit for the merits he had, because he concealed his obligations to the more original minds of Spurzheim and Gall.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *IN SEARCH OF MONSIEUR BALLY.*

(1838.)

MONSIEUR BALLY, who had been cast maker to Spurzheim, whom I last mentioned as kissing Mr. Combe, became friendly to me after the great phrenologist had left the town. The human face, like a principle, is fair or dubious on a first inspection. In Monsieur Bally's there was a certain mixture of the bland and the equivocal. I became acquainted with him as men do with a razor, gradually and cautiously, and in the end the usual accident with razors befell me—I was cut by him.

Jcb did not see his famous apparition more indelibly than I still see Monsieur Bally, as he first walked up the right-hand side of the laboratory in Cannon Street. I could tell the texture of his hair, and the length of his eyebrows—where his coat wanted “nap,” and where it wanted brushing ; for daily contact with plaster used to leave white marks visible, and M. Bally, devoted to his profession, seemed unconscious of what ought to follow, *viz.*, the brushing.

No sooner was Mr. Combe gone, than I was given to understand by my new friend, Bally, that he intended a longer stay, and proposed doing a little business in making busts and casts, could he and the person in want of such things be brought together. To this end I was to promote a knowledge of his wishes and abilities among all likely persons to whom, directly or indirectly, I had access. My kind friend, Dr. Ick, curator of the Philosophical Institution, to whom belonged the distinction of being the philosopher among the philosophicals, assisted me with addresses. In this way Miss Louisa Anne Twamley, the

bright-eyed authoress of the "Banks of the Wye," was, among others, induced to call on M. Bally and favour him with a sitting.

It may be that my services in the way of inquiry and recommendation (for Bally was not without ability, which recommended itself) were of little value to my friend of the casts, but he chose to stimulate my zeal by promising to take my own cast by way of reward. I thought M. Bally a very obliging man, and published his professional skill far and wide.

At last the auspicious morning arrived when I was to be immortalized in plaster. My hair was combed in appropriate order—I had put on our best family face, for my ancestors had pride of race. At last the factory bell rang nine—between that and ten breakfast had to be eaten, Bally to be visited, and the cast to be taken. But breakfast that morning took little time. I soon left the Old Wharf wall (above which the Foundry stood), vaulted along Paradise Street (I still speak of Birmingham), and by a quarter past nine I was in Upper Temple Street at M. Bally's door. A ring of the bell brought a maid down, who informed me that "M. Bally had gone to Manchester the day before."

When the door was closed I sat down on the step. I had made no bargain with Bally. I never made a bargain with anybody, but simply believed those who made one with me. When I comprehended, though outside, how completely I was "taken in," I returned to my work, when the anodyne-toned "Never mind, George," of my father dispelled my disappointment, and set me laughing at my credulity, without forgetting it, and made reflections in my crude way, how a small breach of faith on the part of a man may sow distrust in the mind of a youth. It was an inextinguishable instinct with me that, if a thing was wrong, it ought to be put right, and the wrong never passed out of my mind until the opportunity came of resenting or rectifying it. Many times have I been sorry that I had this quality of mind. It has been the source of loss and peril to me. At that time, however, it seemed a duty to me not to pass injustice over. I still think so, though I have a clearer conception of the consequences. Therefore, to find out M. Bally and give him to understand that I understood his peculiar mode of business, became an object with me. Some time after I became unwell,

mainly through too little sleep. In addition to being early at work and late at night at classes, I and three fellow-students sat up one night a week with our books. This was sheer foolishness, since the physical power of learning was decreased by it. The physiology of thought was unknown to us. My medicine man, as the Indians call him, advised a few weeks' travel on foot. This mode of travel suited my means, and I set out, taking the way which led through Manchester, though I knew it was not the city of recreation; but I thought thereby I might fall in with my old friend the professor of plaster casts. Day by day, as I proceeded on my valetudinarian way, I was cheered by this hope. Several days were spent in passing through Burton, Derby, Matlock, and Buxton. The memory of my first night in Manchester still remains with me. Fever and delirium came and whirled the room round where I lay on a bed, kindly made for me on the floor in a Socialist's house, amid bales of broad-cloth. The next morning I wandered down to King Street, where, with better success than in Birmingham, I asked for M. Bally.

"Mon Dieu ! Meester Holihoke,"—so far as at this distance of time I can reproduce his manner of speaking—exclaimed the man of busts, as he saw me enter his room. "Mon Dieu, Meester Bally," I replied, "it is very proper we should meet once more." "Vell, really, you see I couldn't. I vent away. I didn't intend—I meant—" M. Bally replied, with other inconclusive sentences. "Ah, Mr. Bally," I added, "never mind. If you thought me too unimportant a person to keep a promise to, you should have thought me too unimportant to make me one. How is a young man to learn lessons of good faith if his elders do not teach them? It was not right to do what you have, and to tell you so was all I came for. I wish no more, except that I wish you good-morning." That evasive Swiss I never saw more.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *A TOUR ON FOOT.*

(1838.)

My early religious impressions were waning, yet I had set out on my travels very much in the state of the apostles, who carried neither purse nor scrip. The state of my purse was like Mr. Spurgeon's chapel funds—a subject for prayer. It contained but five sovereigns for a five weeks' tour. Yet, without making any addition to it, several shillings remained on my return. My object was to go to the Isle of Man, as I could see the sea there.

Many incidents of the journey still enrich my memory. As they might not equally interest the reader, I pass them over. An old pocket map of the main roads of England was my guide. Railways had not then intersected the country, and a map of 1780 was still of use to a pedestrian in 1838. Besides, as every road was of interest to me, it did not matter whether there was a nearer one. Columbus was not more enchanted at seeing new lands than I was at seeing new places. Often I wished I had been born a geographer with a mission to make a map of the world and see it first. When I arrived at Matlock in Derbyshire, it was the time of the wakes. Having engaged a bed at a large inn, about ten o'clock I asked to be shown to my room. The pressure of custom was given as an excuse for delay. At twelve o'clock, thinking the delay had lasted long enough, I repeated my request, when I was told that, by reason of demands upon them, owing to the wake, no bed remained at their disposal, and that I must seek one elsewhere. Upon this I offered to sleep on a bench in one of the rooms.

Being refused, I remonstrated, saying they had no right, after contract made, to turn out a traveller and a stranger into the streets at midnight, where he knew no one, nor the road to another inn. As they had kept me four hours in the house under promise of a bed, until it was too late to expect that any other inn was open, I demanded the name of the nearest magistrate, whom I would call up and claim his interference. They professed ignorance of his name, and I had to take my knapsack and go out into the street, which was then very dark. Unable to discover any house open, or find any one to direct me, there seemed no prospect of shelter, when, coming upon a young woman parting from her lover, I appealed to them—to her chiefly, a woman having quicker sympathy for a stranger in need than a man. On her instigation "Alfred" bethought himself that down a near lane there was a small public-house still open. It proved to be full of wake revellers and a young fiddler playing for dancers. The mistress was a compassionate person, who said they had but one spare bed, which was reserved for the fiddler, but if he was willing I might share it. He was a pleasant youth of my own age, who, being conciliated by a glass of ale, agreed to the arrangement, provided I would wait until the dancing was over. This did not happen until three o'clock in the morning. As the bed only accommodated one, and being anxious not to incommod him, I slept on the edge, where I was so delicately poised that a dream on the wrong side of my head would have destroyed my balance. A lecture at the Mechanics' Institution on the then new theory of the "Duality of the Brain," which I had recently heard, put this conceit into my mind. In the morning, finding my friend had a reading disposition, I gave him some numbers of the *Penny Magazine*, which I had with me, the illustrations of which were new to him, as he appeared never to have seen a paper with pictures. They proved as valuable as glass beads in dealing with Indians. He declared them a sufficient reward for his accommodation, as he had incurred no expense on my account—at which I was very glad, as it left my limited purse undiminished.

The cliffs, dells, and surprising scenery of Derbyshire, of which I had no previous idea, delighted me. Stale, flat, and commonplace was the district in which I had lived, compared with the scenes amid which I now wandered. No bridge, no stream, no

mountain, no castle, no battle-ground, no spot of historic beauty, had hitherto met my sight. Over the foundry walls where I worked had come gleams of the sun, which had made me long to see the outlying world on which it shone unconfin'd. Now I was in that world: happy days were those, for my heart was as light as my purse!

Buxton, though then in its infancy compared with its present attractions, was marvellous in my eyes. Whenever I could I lodged in cottages, as I was not obliged to buy beer "for the good of the house," and a basin of milk was cheaper and served for the third meal of the day. A pale-faced young traveller, of unforbidding aspect and his head full of town ideas, was—when there were no penny papers to give news—sometimes as welcome in English country places as a New York "prospector" at a prairie farm in the Far West. I found it so. Often the husband would sit up until a late hour conversing. Sometimes I thought the cottagers regarded me as a pedlar of news, since they made me only very moderate charges for my night's accommodation. Breakfast I never took, under pretext that I had to be early on my way, and for twopence I could buy on the wayside what was sufficient for me.

It was a surprise to me to find myself often taken to be a foreigner. It might be from my peculiar voice, or from my freedom of manner and speech. Most English persons go without information rather than ask it of strangers. With what civility was possible to me I asked it at once of any one at hand, and entered into conversation with any one whom I thought would speak again, and, if doubtful whether they would, I tried it. Thus, many hours which otherwise had been dull became bright, and myself better informed. Professing to know but little (which was more true than was thought), and saying I was one of the few persons extant who was without any conviction of his own infallibility—often gave persons good heart to tell me what they knew. Any interest in my conversation was owing to my having been a teacher of others—in Sunday School and classes—what little I knew best I had mostly learned myself: and as I had enthusiasm in describing the stages through which my own dulness had passed, I acquired confidence, and imparted it.

At length one Sunday at noon I entered Manchester, with no

little astonishment at its extent, its mills, its buildings, and its incessant streets. I found my way to the pretty little Social Institute which I knew existed in Salford, where I should meet some friends familiar with my name, as it had been mentioned in the *New Moral World*, read there. Not long before, James Morrison had died. He was the first editor of ability and enthusiasm the Trades Unionists had. His paper, the *Pioneer*, was friendly to co-operation. His widow, a pleasant little person, was mistress of the tea-parties at the Salford Institute, where I spent the remainder of the day very happily, and heard the afternoon and evening lectures. There I first met Joseph Smith, whose zeal had built the hall, and who forty-six years later died of sudden pleasure at Wissahickon, near Philadelphia, on reading an account I had written of him in the History of Co-operation in England, when he thought himself forgotten. But of him mention may be made later.

Of course, as already related, I spent the first morning in Manchester in paying an unlooked-for visit to my absconding friend, Bally, of whom the reader has heard.

It was from regard to my purse that I rose at four o'clock on my last morning in Manchester, to go by the early boat down the Bridgewater Canal to Liverpool. The canal, however, had charms of its own for me, and I much desired to be upon it, as I had often coveted the life of a boat-boy who went through romantic scenery and by strange towns, day and night.

After enchanted days in Liverpool among ships—never having seen any before—I one morning stepped into a small steamer going to the Isle of Man. John Green, a Social missionary stationed in the town (and who was afterwards cut into two parts on a New York railway), came down to the quayside to see me. He had heard of me as a young speaker on the same side as himself. Not knowing me, and learning I was leaving by that boat, he called from the quayside, "Holyoake, Holyoake!" I remember I was as much startled at hearing my name as Robinson Crusoe was when the parrot first called out his. Never being a traveller before, I felt on the vessel like a stranger in a new country—if the sea-coast can be considered a country. On the way to the Isle of Man we had bad weather, and were hours going over. An old lady died from fright or sickness on the passage. She was covered over with tarpaulin,

to prevent lady passengers being further affrighted. In the Isle of Man I came to know the pleasant editor of the *Manx Herald*, who invited me to write him a letter concerning the Birmingham Mechanics' Institution. It was my first letter to a newspaper. There seemed to be little money at the office, and I was paid for my contribution by a roast chicken and a pint bottle of port wine. It is natural I should remember this, for I have since made many contributions to papers for which I should have been glad to be requited as I was in that honest island. I spent a pleasant week in Douglas, where fish and eggs were then marvellously cheap. My landlady would often cook me five small fish, when I asked only for three. She said fish did not count in Douglas.

On my return to England I wandered through North Wales, and arrived at the slate quarries in the neighbourhood of Llanberis on a Sunday morning. At a house at which I inquired my way, a little girl, about six years of age, who had died, was about to be carried to the church at the foot of Snowdon. That being my destination I asked leave to accompany the funeral party. To my surprise the coffin consisted merely of a long narrow box with a long rope loop on either side, which two active Welsh girls took hold of, and rapidly descended the mountain side, the coffin swinging between them. Half a dozen relatives of the poor child made the procession. As the distance was two or three miles, and the sun hot, the fatigue of the journey was beyond my expectation. The girls leaped like goats from boulder to boulder as they descended to the valley. With my knapsack and overcoat I found it no easy task to keep up with them, but as I could discern no path among the slate quarries, I was compelled to keep them in sight. When we reached the old church it was an hour before the time when the clergyman was expected. I examined the church, and stepped into the pulpit—much to the surprise of the mourners—to look at the Welsh Bible, as I had never seen one. That night I slept at the inn at the foot of Snowdon, and when in bed smoked a portion of a cigar for the first time. My reason was, having been told it might make me giddy, I thought falling would be impossible in bed. That night I slept well, and remained in bed twelve hours. For months I had not been able to lie there six. Though I ascribed the effect to the cigar,

the probability was that my violent exertions in keeping up with the funeral party had more to do with it.

The next morning I went to Bettws-y-Coed. On my way over the mountain I walked through a cloud charged with snow, which, as I had never been in one before, interested me very much. Afterwards, I fell in with a party of four persons—a man and his wife, a young girl and her father—walking leisurely along. The men told me they were tailors from Coventry, who each year made an excursion in that way through some part of England they had not seen. They had saved a little money for the purpose, which seemed to me a very wholesome and intelligent thing to do, and deserved imitation by more people of that occupation. As I wished for company, and they some variety of conversation, it was agreed that I should travel with them, paying one-fifth of the travelling expenses, which I had previously ascertained were small. Their plan was to lunch at an inn door at mid-day on bread and cheese and a little ale. The little enterprising wife would visit some farmhouse on the way and buy a pullet, a piece of bacon, and vegetables. These the strongest man of the party, who was short and robust, carried in a carpet bag. When the day's walking was completed and roadside spots of interest visited, a quiet picturesque inn was selected, where, for a small payment, we had the use of the kitchen fire, when the wife and daughter of the party prepared a meal and made a cheaper bargain for the night by engaging beds for the whole five. Setting out in the early morning, buying a loaf and butter on our way, we made in due time a repast under a tree, after obtaining warm milk from a farmhouse ; and so we travelled many days with much pleasure and economy.

While we were together the conversation fell mostly to me. My companions were all religious, as that term was then understood—and knew nothing else. They had heard only preachers of their own sect, and were not connoisseurs even in sermons. Then I became sensible, as I had never been before, of the advantage of going ever so little outside the circumscribed and monotonous area of evangelical theology. The literature of the human world had princely ideas which I found would come and dwell with whoever would receive them : and that even the poorest person might keep an open mind, hospitable

as a baronial hall, where kingliest thoughts of genius would visit and stay, so long as they were welcome, and even attend their entertainer as a lordly retinue whenever he went abroad. True, I had few of these retainers with me, but what I had I was pleased to show and my companions pleased to see—judging from their manner.

When we parted, it was with the hope that we might meet again in the same way. Before ending my travels, I went to Boscobel to see the oak in which Charles II. was said to have hidden from his pursuers—though history has never explained that the nation had any advantage in his escaping or returning. I arrived in Birmingham after nearly six weeks' absence, much refreshed and instructed by my first adventure into the outer world.

Now I had seen the mountains where Nature keeps an outlook on her dominions, hamlets sleeping in their morning beauty, and incessant towns where nothing is still. I had seen even the bewitching peace of the sea and had been on it when it was roused to imperious resentment by the irresponsible and ruffianly winds. No more did I believe in the predictions that monotony would prevail as civilization extended. What I had seen convinced me that not even ignorance could repress the resilient diversity of humanity, and that new knowledge infinitely multiplied itself.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *PARTNERSHIP IN PROPAGANDISM.*

(1839.)

A **LIFE** of a propagandist I do not remember ever to have seen. Some wiser person than myself may one day write such a life. There are unobserved tragedies in propagandism as moving as any which befall better understood adventures of romantic war. To be married to ideas interferes with the felicities of the other kind of marriage, which men value. The world has seen two famous philosophers, Mill and Carlyle, write impassioned praise of their wives. In Mill it was gratitude—in Carlyle, remorse. John Stuart Mill was married to ideas, and the impassioned eulogy he wrote upon Mrs. Mill, after her death, reads like the cry of regret as well as of love. She deserved regard, inasmuch that she knew his chief life was in his ideas, and was intelligently content with such attentions as befell her, when leisure came to him. When her loss made him sensible of her fine devotion, his affection became conscious to him. It was so with Carlyle. His wife married him from pride in his genius, but afterwards she pined for attentions which he, engrossed in his great thoughts, never paused to give. When he came to read her letters after her death, his heart awoke, and he made what reparation he could by justly directing the publication of her letters—although they told against himself.

There is no comparison between myself and these eminent propagandists whom I have named—nor do I intend to suggest it, save in the sense that private soldiers share the perils of the war of ideas as well as the generals. That is all I mean to imply. My acquaintance with my future wife was when she

lived in the house of the chief Unitarian bookseller in Birmingham, James Belcher, whose father had been imprisoned in Warwick Gaol in Dr. Priestley's days for selling heterodox works, political and religious. The favourite publication of the young "person" (to use Mill's term) here referred to, was *Chambers's Journal*. It implied a native human taste to like the practical human knowledge of the affairs of this life, in one who had been a chorister girl in Wordesley Church, where the teaching was unearthly and unuseful.

We were married in 1839, at the office of my townsman William Pare, Registrar. I took care to explain beforehand to her whom it most concerned, that I had enlisted in the Order of Industry, which did little for its recruits. Yet to try to improve the fortunes of that order was to be my lot, and I could no more be counted upon at home than the sailor or soldier ; and that my means would be as uncertain as duty. We neither of us knew all that sort of compact meant. During forty years, she neither uttered nor thought a reproach, though imprisonment, want, and death to her child came of it. She was herself a soldier's daughter, and had the courage of one. She met a calamity as a soldier meets a shot. If I repeated Lord Bacon's saying, "He who marries gives hostages to fortune that he will never do anything great," she would say, "We may not do great things, but we can do honest ones. Do what you think right, and never mind me." At no time did I inquire what her opinions were on theological subjects, nor interrogate my children thereupon, but wished them to form their own opinions ; only counselling them to acquaint themselves with both sides of every question interesting to them, and to have clear grounds for their conclusions. My propagandism consisted in explaining things—never in persuading, since the responsibility of holding opinions belonged to those who accepted them. My own opinion was not concealed, for I always distrusted and often conceived contempt for the silent, whose philosophical impartiality ended in concealing their own thoughts. My doctrine was that decision should be made on the fullest knowledge obtainable : the duty of choice belonged to those who were to be answerable for the opinions entertained.

My wife had a way of speaking and writing more clear,

simple, and compact than mine, by which I was instructed. My tendency and my fault were to say too much about everything, whereas she would express spontaneously in a few words all that the occasion required. I could not by art attain what she attained without it. A "bit of her mind" was always worth having. Like a piece of malachite, the whole quarry was the same, and all good. But praise is vain without some illustration which enables the reader to test it. It was in impromptu decisions in which she excelled. Of examples of her writing, two instances are at hand—written when she was a very young woman, and not known to me until many years after. The first is a letter to my sister Caroline :—

"As to the famine, on account of which a fast is ordered I am disposed to think that by the time it reaches her Majesty, there will be other means resorted to for its removal than praying, and more honest and manly means might be resorted to on the present occasion. I question whether the famine much affects the landowners. Why not allow the land to be cultivated for the support of poor wretches who are suffering instead of idly praying? It does not say much for the humanity of the Being the people are directed to call upon, if the sight of their misery does not elicit His attention without a formal prayer. I fear the fast is only a deceitful way of pacifying hunger, fearing that hunger may induce the hungry to eat food where they find it. I cannot think that any humane being would inflict more misery on the poor than they already suffer. It puzzles me to make out what men are educated for, or what they do with their philosophy. Do men call upon the Supreme Being to build houses for them when they fall? When suffering from ill-health, they try to find out a remedy—they do not trust to prayer alone. It is very odd people are always talking of the wisdom and goodness of God, and yet they cannot trust His wisdom and goodness. Most assuredly we never trust those we have no confidence in."

The other citation is a note on Harriet Martineau's "Household Education":—

"We often speak about a very important part of our

character—honesty ; but, I think, seldom look at the subject fairly, for, when we come to scrutinize the matter, we often find ourselves anxious to fulfil every obligation, not merely money matters alone—yet very often one very important feature of honesty we are not equal to, which, I think, a great weakness—that is, demanding with the same firmness what is due to us. That, I think, requires considerable moral courage, which, in justice to ourselves as well as to other persons, we ought to cultivate, and not trust to our silently wishing that other persons should fulfil their engagements as punctually as ourselves."

Of Madeline, our first daughter, who perished during my imprisonment, I speak in another chapter. Max, our boy of nine years, was killed by a cabman who ran over him at the corner of Tavistock Street, Tavistock Square. A gentleman whose name I never knew carried him tenderly to University College Hospital. His own clothes were spoiled by the blood. I could never learn who he was to thank him for all that kindness. At the inquest I was allowed to make a statement as to the recklessness of the cabman who killed him, but was told that I could not give evidence against him, as I was unable to take the oath. Max's favourite hand-brush and toys were put in his coffin with him. In the grave of Peruvian women a fan is sometimes found in their hands, and the faded feathers of parrots and humming-birds. The graves of children oft contain a girl's workbox or a boy's sling. We buried the poor fellow like a little Peruvian. My friend, Mr. C. D. Collet, sang over his grave Miss Martineau's fine hymn, beginning :—

“ Beneath this starry arch,  
Nought resteth or is still :  
And all things have their march  
As if—by one great will,  
Moves one, move all.  
Hark ! to the footfall !  
On, on, for ever.”

On bringing to my wife's table any one with whom I intended to act, she would predict what I had to expect. “ While you are near to revise his acts, you will have a good assistant in such a one,” she would say, “ but if left to his own responsi-

bility he will fail you." Of another she would say, " You will have a good colleague in him ; but unless you are prepared to abdicate your own opinion in all things, when you differ from him, you will have an enemy." When I was not able to accept her judgment I had reason afterwards to regret it.

Great pleasure was possible in the household with her, because she had the elementary sense of taste—though not acquired in the schools. Her preference was for one or two things of real worth and beauty ; she was impatient of a crowd of commonplace objects, which infect as well as occupy the space in which alone things of beauty can be seen or live.

To the reader who thinks the writer dwells too long on this subject he apologizes in the lines of the poet :—

" . . . Those who living filled the smallest space,  
In death have often left the greatest void.  
When from his dazzling sphere the mighty falls,  
Men, proud of showing interest in his fate,  
Run to each other, and with oaths protest  
How wretched and how desolate they are.  
The good depart, and silent are the good."

Mrs. Holyoake died at Brighton, 1884. For nearly eighteen years she had resided in Sudbury, Harrow-on-the-Hill. Always loving the country and flowers, her little garden was bright with them earlier and later than her neighbours'. In the last days of her illness, valued words of sympathy came to her from Lady Tennyson.

We brought Mrs. Holyoake to Highgate, to sleep in the grave with her son Maximilian.

In an undefined way she considered herself a Churchwoman, and would have been definitely so, had the nobler form of Theism, which the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke holds, been recognized in her early days. I could think of no other clergyman for whom I had so much regard, and whose presence at her grave would give so much satisfaction to her, and I therefore asked him to do me the great favour of conducting such service as he might see fit in the chapel.

Mr. Brooke sent a letter which in its generous consideration and sympathy was of the nature of a service :—

"January 15, 1884.

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,—I am very sorry—for I should

have liked to have done this—that I cannot come on Wednesday. I have a close engagement which I cannot get rid of ; a special business which must be done that day. I wish I could have known of your desire earlier, but now it is too late. I am very sorry for your loss. It is a very grievous thing, as I know full well, to part with one who has slept at one's side for years, and been at home with one's heart. There is nothing which fills that relationship ; and I feel a heartfelt grief for you. But you have work to do, which, as I think, will still be loved by her, and still sympathized with by her ; and work heals enough of the heart to make life possible, though nothing heals it altogether. Loss is loss, let men say what they will.

"I wish I could see you now and again. When you come up to London, let me know. I have never forgotten my talks with you. Yours most sincerely,

"S. A. BROOKE."

Thus it fell to me to speak at her grave. What I said follows.

The only public wish I knew her to have was that some one should say a few words at her grave as it had been my custom to do often at the graves of others.

I read the remarkable conversation between the angel Uriel and the prophet Esdras, whom the angel rebukes for his discontent at not knowing the secrets of the Most High when he had not comprehended that which passed before him in daily life. Then the prophet with instructed sense was content to ask for understanding of that which most concerned him to know.

This was the measure of her unformulated reverence and conviction—willing to know what could be known, but always acting on what could be understood. Simplicity, directness, and unaffectedness were preferences of hers. Show in speech, like show in life, seemed to her want of taste. She had three qualities beyond most women—service, truth, and pride. Such was the spontaneity of her sense of service of others, that she never thought of herself, which was a misfortune in one sense, since it is a kindness which is blindness, as it must involve others in cares. Yet without some of this self-abnegation in women public affairs could never be attended to by men. The

truth she cared for was not only of speech but of conduct—the only form of truth which can be trusted. Of this she had so clear a sense that the absence of it in others was not concealable from her. Her pride was more than self-respect : it was debtlessness, an independence of obligation, which was not a second nature, it was her first, and she had had no other. In the days when our income was the least and most precarious, she never had even a small debt. It was not conceivable by her that I should stand on a platform and speak of political, social, or religious reform, and owe people money. When it was clear that the end of all things to her was at hand, her last inquiry was whether I had paid some small accounts due at Harrow. I had done so, and afterwards I pensioned her cat, and kept up the small annual gifts she was accustomed to make. The lines of my friend, Mr. Percy Greg, are her epitaph—

“ The martyr's cross, without the martyr's cause,  
The grief, the wrong, without the self-applause,  
The homely round of duties nobly done :—  
These were her life, who sleeps beneath this stone.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE INSURGENT AFFAIR IN THE BULL RING, BIRMINGHAM.*

(1839.)

THE first insurgent affair of which I was a witness, and if not an actor a sympathizer, was in the Birmingham Bull Ring.

When the middle class had got their £10 franchise, they did not see what the working class wanted with votes. The Whigs had no sympathies for and the Tories had active dislike of the poor Chartist, and described their unfriended, indigent, and generous advocates as “hired orators.” Harmless meetings were held nightly around the Nelson Monument. The “Friends of the People,” as they called themselves after the manner of Marat, were listened to with greedy ears. The wilder the speeches the more they were applauded—because their extravagance implied sympathy and indignation. Despair was diffused like a pestilence. Invasion itself would have excited acquiescence. As the Berlinese cheered the arrival of the first Napoleon, Birmingham would have welcomed invaders, if they came in the disguise of deliverers.

In any change of masters there was hope, since the prospects of the working class could not, it was thought, be worse. Not the ignorant alone, but educated men, then and since, were of the same way of thinking, and said so. Then fairness was regarded as feebleness. There was nothing too mad to be believed, nothing too malignant to be said, and that not of alien rule, but of a class in the same town. Hundreds made arms secretly. Those who had no better weapons sharpened an old file and stuck it in a haft. I saw many such. A dozen

gentlemen in the town, who had sympathy with the just discontent of the people, could have kept the peace with applause. The sapient and contemptuous magistrates sent for one hundred policemen from London. Magistrates oftener break the peace than workmen, as they do in Ireland, as they did at Peterloo in 1819—as Sir Charles Warren and Mr. Matthews, acting on their ideas of public duty, did in Trafalgar Square in 1867.<sup>1</sup> Birmingham would not be kept in order by London police, though they were at least their own countrymen, and the Chartists broke down the iron railings around St. Thomas's Church, and drove the London contingent out of the Bull Ring. I have often wondered what Irishmen must think of having their heads broken by alien ruffians of order, sent over from England, when Birmingham men treated London policemen as aliens. Some frenzied men set fire to houses in revenge. Soldiers were brought out, and a neighbour of mine, who happened to be standing unarmed and looking on at the corner of Edgbaston Street, had his nose chopped off. Soldiers, like policemen, soon know when outrages are expected of them. There was no resistance after the police were driven away. At four o'clock next morning I went with my wife, who wished to see whether Mr. Belcher, whose house had been fired, needed aid in his household, as she had great respect for him. Although we alone crossed the Bull Ring, the soldiers rushed at us, and tried to cut me down. I did not like them. Until then I thought the duty of a policeman or soldier was to keep his head, protect the people, and keep the peace except in self-defence. The town was sullen and turbulent, and had good reason to be so. Whoever judges the capacity of Birmingham for freedom, tolerance, and self-government, by the language and acts of that time, would judge it as Ireland is judged to-day. Any Whig, and more so the Tories, would have declared it madness to trust the people of the town with municipal or Parliamentary vote. Yet, when they had both, Birmingham became the best governed town in Great Britain. It has been accorded the distinction of being a city now, and I from being a townsman have become a citizen.

Mr. George Julian Harney was in the town at the time of the

<sup>1</sup> Had the genius of Sir Charles Napier been present, who in his day encountered armed Chartists, there had been neither conflict nor ill-feeling. It is manner which enrages, not persons.

“riots.” It was then I first knew him. It was said he kept out of the way ; but he did not.<sup>1</sup> He lived in a by-street near the Bull Ring, and I opposite to him, and saw him daily in the riot week standing at the door openly.

In justice to the gentlemen of Birmingham, it ought to be said that the Chartists assailed them by hateful epithets as being Whigs and middle-class traitors, which disinclined them to take part with the people where they thought their claims well founded. If any working men wished to see fairer treatment of gentlemen, they were themselves denounced “moderates” and agents of the “middle class.” Still the gentlemen had got all they wanted and were educated, and should have had generous forbearance towards men less informed and incensed with real wrongs.

Though a Chartist myself and always acting with the party, I never joined in their war upon the Whigs. The Tories, as my friend Charles Reece Pemberton said, “would rob you of £1 and give you twopence back.” The Whigs would not give you twopence, neither did they rob you of the pound, and were in favour of that legislation which would enable you to earn a shilling for yourself and keep the pound in your pocket. The Whigs were the traditional friends of liberty. The Tories were always against it. The Chartists suffered indignities at the hands of the Whigs and allowed their resentment to shape their policy. To spite the Whigs the Chartists gave their support to the Tories—their hereditary and unchanging enemies. The Whigs were the only political party standing between the people and the aggressive masterfulness of the Tories. It was upon Chartist resentment towards the Whigs that Lord Beaconsfield traded—and supplied the Chartist leaders with money to enable them to express it. I knew many who took money for that purpose. Francis Place showed me cheques paid to them to break up Anti-Corn Law meetings, because that cause was defended by Whigs. I saw the cheques which were sent to Place by Sir John Easthope and other bankers, who had cashed them. In some of Place’s books which were sold to Josiah Parkes, and afterwards went to the British Museum, Chartist cheques may possibly still be seen. At the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harney informs me that he was not liberated on bail from Warwick Gaol until the evening of the fires.

same time these Chartists were neither mercenary nor traitors. They did not take the money to betray their own cause, nor for their personal use, but to defray the expenses of agitation against the Whigs, who had treated Mr. Ernest Jones as Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour afterwards treated Mr. O'Brien. There was no contempt or hatred within the limits of not sacrificing principle which was not justifiable against them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *A KNAVE WHO WANTED LESSONS IN MATHEMATICS.*

(1840.)

SUCH a one was my first pupil. No phrase of indignation occurs to me adequate to describe my impressions of him.

In 1839 we were living in our first house, in the Sandpits, Birmingham. It was on the verge of the town then. A bright, fresh aspect of verdure lay before the window. A little speaking, a little teaching, a little secretaryship work, alternately or altogether, produced very little income for home. My wife cultivated a small bed of mustard and cress under the window, which, with bread, served for a meal when there was nothing else. She was always bright and reticent to her neighbours, but a butcher's wife next door, observing little was bought from them, thought things were not flourishing, and would sometimes bring a cup of porter to the gate, and ask, in a friendly way, her pale-faced neighbour to take a little with her, not assuming there was need for it, and not knowing how to offer anything else.

One morning in January, a portly, respectable-looking gentleman dressed in drab, whom I at first took for a farmer, knocked at the door and asked "whether he was rightly informed that he could have lessons in mathematics there." He did not say by whom he had been so informed, and I was too glad of the inquiry being made to ask him. He was told that "if he wished instruction in Euclid he could have lessons from one to two hours every morning at a moderate rate." He said, "That would do," and arranged to come next day. Nothing further

was said as to terms, as anything he might think reasonable it was worth my while to accept.

Firing was very scant in the house, but the grate was made as cheerful as possible—the table arranged, and diagram material put ready. For five days this unknown visitor came each morning. He paid attention, was inquiring, and seemed interested, but paid nothing. Afraid, by pressing him for payment too soon, of losing a pupil I so much needed, I did not ask him. The next week he repeated his visits. My wife, who was always far more discerning than I was, said, "That man does not intend to pay." To me it was inconceivable. I had taught, as an assistant in a school, all day for 10s. a week and my dinner, and for 10s. 6d. a week without my dinner, but I had always been paid. However, at the end of the second week, I remarked that "I should be glad if he would pay me for the lessons so far." The drab fiend started up, took his hat, and said "he did not intend to pay anything. I had made no bargain as to terms, and he was not bound to give anything." And, after opening the door, he turned round to say—"Young man, let this be a lesson to you. Never do anything for anybody unless you know you will be paid for it. If you follow this rule—and I can see you need it—you will gain a great deal more than you have now lost by giving lessons to me." My contempt and indignation had but one expression—a desire to knock the moralizing knave down; but he was a much more powerful man than I. A woman seldom stands calculating whether a thing can be done. If it ought to be done she generally does it, and my wife would have driven the treacherous student into the streets with a chair had she not remembered that the loss of it was more than she could afford for breaking the knave's head. It occurred to me when it was too late that I did not know who he was, or whence he came, and I could no more sue him than I could a thief who had made tracks and left no address.

What was the didactic scoundrel's object in coming to my door I could never make out—probably to discover what my opinions were, as I had been engaged by the Mechanics' Institution, which had many clerical enemies. But I might have been a curate for anything my pupil could make out, for I was no Pauline believer who spoke of personal views "out of season."

Nevertheless, the rascal's "rule" was worth remembering. It would have been well for me had I regarded it with limitations, though it is a rule that would often lead to selfishness and meanness. I have walked hundreds of miles to speak for nothing, when I knew I should have nothing. I have executed hundreds of commissions, paying cost as well as giving labour, when those who wanted the work done could afford to pay for it, and would have done so, had they any idea it was necessary. I never suggested it, lest it should be thought I wanted to make a profit out of a public service. The fault was mine in two ways: first, I liked being useful, and that encouraged persons to give me opportunities; secondly, I could do nothing by halves, I did what I undertook as thoroughly as I could, and incurred cost and time, never intended or thought of by others.

Persons more wary than myself, I could see, when asked to do things made skilful evasions. "They knew nothing of the facts you might ask them for. They knew not where to refer to them. They had forgotten the details. They did not know who had them in mind. An engagement they could not forego prevented them giving time to the thing asked of them. They had no influence. They knew no one who could aid in the work." What is always more successful, they threw doubts on the good of doing anything, which took the heart out of the inquirer. Such answers are at times real, but oftener I knew them to be given by persons who simply saw no prospect of return for the trouble proposed to them. I never studied the art of doing nothing when something ought to be done. This world would be a cold and shabby world in which nobody did anything unless assured of being paid for it. I have always been a rich man in the satisfaction I have had in what I have done. Still, I might have been reasonably rich in another sense, had I made out, in cases of service beyond my means, a small bill of costs, and collected it. Now I can see I ought to have done it, since others suffered for my scrupulousness.

Nevertheless, to this day I have hated the drab knave—as Cobbett did the "lame fiend" Talleyrand, who came to him for lessons—who first advised me to take special care of my own interests, and for years after I was accustomed to look in police offices and assize courts, expecting and desiring to catch sight of the rascal at the bar, where I hope and believe he must have arrived—though I never had the pleasure of knowing it.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *A ROLL-CALL OF IMPRISONED FRIENDS.*

(1840-1890.)

IF the reader knew how many of my friends have been imprisoned, or have come to a worse end, suspicion would arise as to the prudence of proceeding further in my narrative. If no proof of such assertion is given, it may seem pretentiousness to make it ; if it be substantiated, it may be said that I present a sort of Newgate Calendar of my friends, whereas the list of their names is mainly a roll-call of honourable penalties incurred in the service of society. To some I may recur in separate chapters.

The most illustrious were Garibaldi and Mazzini. Garibaldi had known imprisonment and torture. From youth to mature age he lived in an atmosphere of peril ; his days passed in battle, in flight, in exile, in want, in adventure, and in the face of death by flood and field. Mazzini, greater than Garibaldi, as his sword had been blind had not the pen of Mazzini given it eyes, underwent vicissitudes of which imprisonment was the least forlorn and perilous. Mazzini was not merely the great deviser of action on behalf of liberty, but the inspirer of public passion which made Italian Unity possible. His life was sought in three nations. Only an Italian could have kept his head on his shoulders under such a fierce, organized, imperial, protracted competition for it.

Alberto Mario, the husband of Jessie Meriton White, was several times in Italian prisons, an intrepid soldier and Republican leader. He was the confidant of Garibaldi, by whose side he fought in his most adventurous campaigns, and was a

brilliant disciple of Mazzini. He was an orator as well as a soldier. Handsome, enthusiastic, and incorruptible, he exercised immense influence.

Orsini, who, like Garibaldi, had a passion for fatal enterprises, was beheaded. Pierri, without having any such passion, perished in the same way. Rudio only escaped the headsman's axe, it was said, by betraying his colleagues. Bottesini was one day called upon to play at the Tuileries, when Count Bacciochini, Master of Ceremonies to Napoleon III., examined his double bass to see whether it contained Orsini bombs. Orsini headless was a terror to despots.

Aurelio Saffi, second Triumvir with Mazzini, shared the perils of the defence of Rome, and exile in England. He succeeded his great friend in representing the Republican principle with similar refinement, force, and fidelity. In his later years he was a professor in Bologna, and lived amid the winepresses and vineyards of Forli, honoured, as I found when last his guest there, as foremost of those whose intrepidity and devotion contributed to the freedom of Italy.

I had friendly and personal relations with several eminent Frenchmen who were in peril oft for freedom. Dr. Simon Bernard, known, like Blanqui, as a stormy petrel of revolution on the Continent, was involved in the Orsini affair, and his name became noised over the world. Dr. Bernard, as the reader will see, was in trouble before he took refuge in England. Eight prosecutions had been instituted against him ; twice he had been condemned to imprisonment, and here he narrowly escaped the hangman. Some who were personally in contact with him came to share his danger.

Ledru Rollin was an exile here to escape the same fate. We always held him in honour, as Mazzini said he was the only Frenchman who sacrificed his political position for a country not his own—namely, for justice to Italy. I had the honour to defend him when in England. Mazzini never ceased to inspire friendships for him. Rollin was too little in England to understand us. Mr. Horace Mayhew's famous letters in the *Morning Chronicle* on the condition of the industrious classes in London, misled Rollin into the belief that England was played out. He was confirmed in this belief by the speeches of Tory orators in Parliament, who were always saying, when any measure of

reform was proposed, that the British Constitution was exploded, and that the sun of England was going down for ever. He did not know that the Tories are the professional defamers of the land. During more than half a century, to my knowledge, the sun of England has set for ever every year, and has always turned up again in the next spring. These whimsical predictions so bewildered Ledru Rollin that he published a book on the "Decadence of England," which caused him loss of prestige among us. He never observed that England had still vitality, since it was able to protect him against the wrath of the emperor of his own land, who would have pursued him here had he dared.

Louis Blanc I knew during all the years of his exile, and was invited by his family to his burial in *Père la Chaise*. Next to Mazzini, he was master, not only of the English tongue, but of English ways of thought, and understood the land. He made no mistake like Ledru Rollin. Louis Blanc showed me original records of the great French Revolution, amid which were letters stained with the blood of those who had written them. Louis Blanc was a small man, but he was so entirely a man—you never thought of his stature. He had an impressive face, a firm mouth, and was without any of that assumption of manner which small men often wear lest you should not recognize their importance. Louis Blanc had conscious power which needed no assertion. Though he acquired English staidness of deportment, his French fire broke out in platform speech. He was the greatest expositor of Republicanism, democratic and social, of his day. When Louis Blanc was first an exile here, he was not credited with the fine qualities he possessed, which became apparent in the protracted years of exile. Seventeen years after the Presidential treachery of 1852, the electors of the Seine, Marseilles, and other places besought him to re-appear in Parliament, but he would take no oath of allegiance to the Usurper. He answered, "The distinction of Republicanism is inflexibility of principles—its love of the straight line—its solicitude for human dignity, and its passion for equality." In reply to the suggestion that he should take the oath, he remarked, "The oath, it is said, is an idle formality. Let us not repeat this word too often, if we desire to raise the standard of public morality. There is one man, the Emperor,

who has considered it a 'mere formality,' and France knows what has come of that." Louis Blanc added, "A noble example is an *act*." St. Just said, "Those who do nothing are strong"—when action is dishonour. Louis Blanc remained an exile until the fall of the emperor.

Louis Blanc had a brother, Charles, who was a member of the French Academy. M. Pailleron, who succeeded him, thus described both :—

"Charles was exuberant, passionate, even violent ; but easily resigned, amiable at bottom, and above everything good—a reed, painted like iron. Louis, on the contrary, was gentle, humble, timid, polite, almost obsequious ; yet beneath this mild exterior tenacious, resolute, rebellious—iron, painted so as to resemble a reed."

Of Carlo de Rudio and his troubles I have written in another chapter. He set himself forth as "Count" de Rudio, but if he were a count, his education had been neglected.

Victor Schœlcher, a stormy exile upon whom the French Emperor tried to lay hands, was a frequent visitor to the *Reasoner* office, and a frequent subscriber to our insurgent funds. He was a man of high character and strange experience, and in his day had rendered the State important service. After the fall of Louis Napoleon at Sedan, Schœlcher returned to France, and was accorded the dignity of a Senator. There are pretentious friends of the advance of society who, when they cannot do what they would, do nothing. Schœlcher, when he could not do all he wished, did what he could.

Ulric de Fonvielle, my friend and sometime host, accompanied Victor Noir on a visit to Prince Pierre Napoleon, who shot Victor Noir dead, and fired twice at Ulric de Fonvielle. A very uncivil gentleman was Prince Pierre Napoleon. Wilfrid de Fonvielle, an elder brother of Ulric, and I have been friends for nearly forty years. He was another stormy petrel of the Revolution, both on land and in the air, being an adventurous balloonist at the siege of Paris—distinguished for intrepidity and volcanic ardour, and as a barricadist, a journalist, a man of science, and author of notable books.

The brothers Reclus have both been in peril and prison as

philosophical anarchists. To Elie Reclus, because it had valued memories for him, I gave a fine copy of the only portrait of Robert Owen in which that famous social philosopher appeared as a gentleman—an aspect belonging to him which all other engravings of him missed. Reclus, in his last letter to me, said :—

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I went to the Congresses of Lausanne and Geneva, where I saw your name in the hotel Gibbon des Bergues, but not your person. Afterwards I stayed in Auvergne, and now I must, in three or four days hence, be in Normandy. If you were here on the 15th, I might still have the joy of seeing you. My brother Elisée, whom I expect daily from a tour in the Pyrénées, will be here, and, I daresay, you will soon become friends together. I write to MM. Bewsdeley and Henry Schmahl, who are earnest co-operators, announcing to them your visit, and I trust they will be of some service to you. At the Crédit au Travail, rue Baillet 3 (behind St. Germain l'Auxerrois, near to the Rue de Rivoli), the accountant, Mr. Joseph Gaud, will be apprised of your arrival.”

Felix Pyat I never saw, though I was his publisher. He could never have kept his head upon his shoulders in France, and I incurred the risk of imprisonment in defending his right to use his head in England by publishing, in the face of prosecution, his “Letter on Parliament and the Press.”

Martin Nadaud was a Parisian workman who came to England for security. His intelligence, integrity, and manliness won for him the esteem of Mazzini. He worked at his trade in England, still giving his spare time to promoting freedom both in France and Italy. I found him in 1880 holding a permanent office in the French Parliament House, of which he was a member, always true to his order—the honest Order of Industry.

Alexander Herzen, the accomplished Russian who sent the *Kolokol* (the *Bell*) through the dominions of the Czar, had left Russia for good reasons. We met first at Southampton, where he was seeking information, which I gave him, where the meeting would take place in the Isle of Wight between Garibaldi and Mazzini.

A greater than Herzen was Karl Blind, whom I have still the pleasure to count among my friends. Before he did us the honour to reside in England, now nearly forty years ago, he had had terrible trials, experiencing casemate incarceration. Since then his name is known in every nation and in every literature where the lovers of freedom breathe.

Then there was Dr. Arnold Ruge, of the Frankfort Parliament, who escaped to us to avoid the fate of Blum, the bookseller, who was shot. He resided many years in Brighton, and I had the honour to publish a work which he wrote for me.

The giant Bakounine, who had fled from Russian prisons, was an oft visitor at Fleet Street.

Heinzen was another Russian propagandist, familiar with the interior of a fortress, who was a welcome visitor at the *Reasoner* office. He afterwards went to America, and was the author of many determined pamphlets on insurgency, displaying power and originality. One published in Chicago bore the unpleasant title of "Murder and Liberty."

Prince Krapotkin is the most accomplished anarchist, save the Recluses, whom I have known. No one who does not know the prince can imagine how bright, ardent, wise, and human he is. But the impression his writings give you is that his many attainments are tempered by dynamite. Prince Krapotin is familiar with prisons: still he neither swerves nor fears.

Wilhelm Weitling was a German Communist. His "Gospel of Poor Sinners" was a book of force and original thought. He said he learned English from two works of mine ("Practical Grammar" and "Public Speaking") when first an exile in England. At some expense, I had his speeches translated and printed in the *Movement* when he first spoke in London, and thinking to serve him by enabling him to send copies to America, where he was going, I presented him with some. He, however, violently resented the act as a great affront, thinking I assumed that he had the vanity to diffuse his own speeches. He first taught me that foreigners were apt to be alien in mind as well as race, until naturalized by intercourse and knowledge. He came to England with the reputation of a "dangerous Communist." His liking of prison life in Germany did not grow by what it fed upon; so he, in 1848, tried London for a change, being expelled from Switzerland at the instigation of

the German Government. In one of his speeches in our John Street Institution in London (held by disciples of Robert Owen) he said what was new then, and is not yet old—that “there will neither be equality nor justice so long as those who labour are poorer than those who govern.” Wilhelm Weitling was born at Magdeburg in 1808, and died in America in 1871. He was the first after Babeuf who gave to Socialism a fighting policy, and his proceedings and apostolic advocacy were anxiously watched by various European Governments. In 1834 he formed the “League of the Proscribed.” This was followed by a “League of the Just,” a less happy and more pretentious title in the eyes of outsiders. Weitling was the leader of this League when he came to England. With all his public ardency, he followed his own industry for subsistence. He came one day to make my wife a dress, and I remember how surprised she was to be asked to take off her gown that he might more accurately make the measurement. Men dressmakers and their German customs were unknown to us. Weitling edited a journal in 1841 in which he advocated the formation of a co-operative society. Politics was with him a means to a social end.

Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian leader, acquired more rapidly than Blanc a wonderful mastery of English, but he never understood, any more than Garibaldi, our illogical freedom, or the mysteries of our political constitution. I published a bust of the Magyar orator, made for me by Signor Bezzi, and cheap editions of Kossuth's speeches. Kossuth would have been shot on sight had the Austrians got sight of him. Kossuth's wife, like Garibaldi's Anita, suffered the vicissitudes of war and flight. Though less inflexible than Mazzini or Blanc, and though he entered into political relations with the French Usurper, who was not to be trusted on his word any more than his oath, yet Kossuth gave proof of integrity when peril menaced him. His generals, Bem and Kemetty, adopted the Mahomedan faith for the sake of Ottoman protection. Kossuth bravely refused. Bem, when an exile in England, lived near me, a little off the Euston Road, and I used to meet him as he walked where Bolivar had walked before him, on the broad pavement that runs through Euston Square. Kossuth had studied English in the fortress of Buda. No orator ever spoke in a foreign tongue

with the effect with which he spoke in England. His ideas were as remarkable as his manner, and were an addition to our knowledge, as Toulmin Smith and Professor F. W. Newman testified.

Francis Pulzsky, the Hungarian Prime Minister under the Kossuth Government, narrowly escaped being shot by the Austrians. His youngest son, who wore a picturesque Hungarian dress at evening parties, which well became his handsome face, was a frequent visitor at my house while a student at the London University. Once or twice I dined with his father, who showed me six or seven iron-clasped chests, containing the Royal jewels and the Hungarian crown, which he had with him in an upper room of his house at Highgate (the second or third house at the bottom of Swain's Lane). Madame Pulzsky was a remarkably small, gentle lady, and you wondered that her sons should be men of fine stature. We conversed at table upon the noble moderation of the French in the Revolution of 1848, in not executing those who would have executed them had they been victors. The Usurper who, by the leniency of Republicans came into power, made short work with the Republicans, and shot and transported them by thousands. Madame Pulzsky had seen so many of her friends destroyed that she distrusted the policy of leniency, and said to me, "Mr. Holyoake, if we come into power again, we will cut all the throats we spared before!" The energy with which this was said by so gentle a lady was very impressive. I contented myself by answering that leniency did fail sometimes, and so did relentlessness, but I believed that in the long run the cause of liberty gains more by pardon than by death.

Among leaders of opinion whom I knew who incurred peril in America, the chief was Lloyd Garrison, who was dragged through Boston streets with a rope round his neck, and was imprisoned by the mayor to save him being lynched. In 1879 I had pride in speaking in Stacey Hall on the platform from which he was pulled down. Mr. Quincy, the son of the mayor who saved Garrison, was in the chair. Mr. Garrison lived to find himself honoured in two worlds—in America, and on this "aged" side of the Atlantic. Lord John Russell spoke at a public breakfast given to Garrison, and Mr. Bright made the most eloquent of

all the brief speeches I ever heard from him, and read a passage from the New Testament as I have never heard it read before or since—comparing the persecutions of Garrison with those of the Apostles. About 1850-2, he published in the *Liberator* a letter from Mr. W. J. Linton against me. But Lloyd Garrison was incapable of being mean or unfair, and published a reply from his valued correspondent, Edward Search. Harriet Martineau was also a reader of the *Liberator*, and as soon as she saw the Linton letter she wrote a most generous vindication of me—which was her custom towards any friend whom she knew to be unjustly assailed.

Others who were not hanged came, like Garrison, near to it, and deserve regard when they knowingly took that risk for the service of the unfriended slave, as Harriet Martineau did when in America. Men shrank from the peril she incurred, though men were ready to risk their lives in her defence. To prevent danger to them, she forewent journeys she contemplated, as her death was arranged for her on her way. Had the peril been hers alone, she would never have drawn back.

Not less did George Thompson risk death. Of him I heard Lord Brougham say “he had the most persuasive voice of any orator he ever listened to.” And his competent testimony was confirmed by all who heard Thompson. On his two first visits to America, speaking for the slave, he was hunted to be “hanged on a sour apple-tree.” On his third visit he dwelt with my friend, Mr. Seth Hunt, at his home under Mount Holyoke. He slept in the “Prophet’s Chamber,” where others in peril had slept before ; and which in happier days I had the honour to occupy. But were I to mention all my friends who succoured the hunted and condemned, I must include here certain Englishmen, Colonel Hinton, of Washington ; Mr. W. H. Ashurst ; Mr. R. A. Cooper, of Norwich ; Major Evans Bell, and many others. George Thompson afterwards became M.P. for the Tower Hamlets. Had his personal fortune enabled him to remain in the House of Commons, he would have become eminent there. Mr. F. W. Chesson, who continued through another generation the same noble exertions on behalf of the oppressed and unfriended in many nations, married Mr. Thompson’s daughter.

Since Toussaint L’Ouverture, whose tragic story has been

written by Harriet Martineau in "The Hour and the Man," there has been no nobler champion of the coloured race than Frederic Douglas. He was born under sentence—the dread sentence of slavery—a doom of lifelong imprisonment without hope of ending. When wandering homeless at night about Peoria, no minister would open his doors to the slave (though Douglas was himself a preacher), when a passenger told him to knock at Colonel Robert Ingersoll's gate, and he would find shelter and welcome under the generous heretic's roof. It was in Ingersoll's house that I spent my first evening with the noble slave, who was then Provost Marshal of Washington. The colonel produced his choicest champagne to celebrate the event. It is told in the annals of slavery, that when Douglas was assailed and hissed on the platform by slave-owners, he paused, and then said, "Yes, a hiss is what you always hear when the waters of truth drop on the fires of hell." This saying is also ascribed to Clay, another orator for the freedom of the slave ; but it shows the quality of Douglas on the platform that the splendid retort should be related of him.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *ENGLISH AND IRISH AGITATORS WHO GAVE TROUBLE TO JURIES AND JUDGES.*

(1840-1890.)

THE reader will observe that some names are mentioned only incidentally, and others at more length. Some described here briefly are in other chapters further mentioned.

Another friend whom I knew, bearing a memorable name—Leigh Hunt—was imprisoned, as all the world knows, for his boldness in reminding a certain Royal personage that personal morality would be as useful in those of high as in those of humble station. Leigh Hunt's career was before my time, but I had the honour to know him in his later years, and still read with pride a published letter which he addressed to me. From his earlier years to his closing day, he never swerved from the perilous principle of saying what he thought right and knew to be useful, regardless of that cowardly policy of waiting on public opinion until the right thing can be done safely.

Madame Jessie White Mario was the first distinguished platform speaker among Englishwomen. When she first spoke on Italian questions, women had not spoken in public with the view of influencing State affairs. Madame Mario was more than Miss Nightingale at Scutari; she went with Garibaldi's expedition and rescued the wounded under fire. She was imprisoned in Genoa five months in 1857, in Ferrara where Tasso was incarcerated, and in Rome. As well as aiding by her intrepid services the cause of Italy, she wrote vindictory lives of the distinguished heroes whose names, before all others, represent the unity of that wondrous land. She told me at

Lendinara that, should a war arise between England and Italy, she had become so much Italian that she could not live and see Italy suffer ; yet she was at the same time English at heart, and could not bear the thought that her native land should fail. Therefore, should war occur, she should apply at St. Peter's Gate for some retreat in his dominions. Madame Mario has published works of authority on the lives of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Dr. Bertani, and others. It was "To Miss J. Meriton White" that Walter Savage Landor addressed the following letter, which caused great disquietude in the Tuileries. It first appeared in the *Atlas* newspaper under the intrepid editorship of Mr. Henry J. Slack :—

"At the present time I have only One Hundred Pounds of ready money at my disposal, and am never likely to have so much in future. Of this, I transmit FIVE to you, towards 'the acquisition of 10,000 Muskets to be given to the First Italian Province which shall rise.' The remaining £95, I reserve for the Family of the First Patriot who asserts the dignity and performs the duty of tyrannicide. Abject men have cried out against me for my commendation of this Virtue, the highest of which a man is capable, and now the most imperative. Is it not an absurdity to remind us that usurpers will rise up afresh ? Do not all transgressors ? And must we therefore lay aside the terrors of chastisement, or give a *Ticket of Leave* to the most atrocious criminals ? Shall the laws be subverted, and we be told that we act against them, or without their sanction, when none are left us, and when guided by Eternal Justice we smite down the subvertor ? Three or four blows, instantaneous and simultaneous, may save the world many years of war and degradation. If it is unsafe to rob a Citizen, shall it be safe to rob a People ? "

Before enumerating political advocates in England, insurgent publishers claim notice who, in a sense, made the advocates what they were, and created for them their auditors. Foremost among them—greatest, most determined and impassable of them all—was Richard Carlile, my friend and adviser at my own trial at Gloucester, and who had himself been imprisoned nine years and four months. In the "Dictionary of National

Biography," I have written Carlile's life. Acts of defiance of the evil Governments of his day, in which Carlile persisted, had been visited by a long term of transportation, as happened to Muir and Palmer. It was Carlile's intrepid publication of prohibited books which established the freedom of the press in England.

Next to him, and contemporaneous with him, was Henry Hetherington. The first time I spoke at a graveside was at Kensal Green, when Hetherington was buried amid a concourse of 2,000 persons. *The Times* said of him that he was one of a band "who were familiar with the inside of every gaol in the kingdom." Hetherington made no parade, no defiance, but was immovable. He did for the unstamped press what Carlile did for Freethought works. A disciple of Robert Owen, Hetherington was always for reason; but he had the courage of reason, which he was capable of infusing into others—for 500 persons were imprisoned for selling his unstamped papers. He defended trades unions when they were illegal, and had the merit of defining the policy which co-operative advocates of profit-sharing labour have maintained since.

James Watson was my first publisher. He was imprisoned several times for his persistence in publishing prohibited books and newspapers. Between Watson and Hetherington a remarkable friendship existed. Both published some earlier works for me, but neither would publish without understanding that it was consistent with the business interest of the other that he should do it.

John Cleave incurred imprisonment. He was a rotund, energetic, Radical publisher, and was the third of the trio of newsvendors whose names were known in every town and village in the three kingdoms—"Hetherington, Watson, and Cleave." Henry Vincent married Cleave's daughter. Cleave did not give others an impression that he had a passion for risk; but Watson and Hetherington, whenever peril came to others which they ought to share, placed themselves at once in the front rank of jeopardy.

Abel Heywood, in earlier years, published a work for me. The name of Heywood in the provinces was as famous as that of Hetherington in London. Heywood was imprisoned for the sale of unstamped publications. He was afterwards Mayor of

Manchester, and the Queen was dissuaded from visiting the city during his mayoralty as she intended, by those who resented his steadfast and honourable defence of public liberty: though, had her Majesty known it, it was a reason why she should have done honour to a mayoralty held by one whose services reflected distinction on her reign.

One of my earliest friends in Birmingham was John Collins, a Birmingham local preacher, whose hand I held as a boy when we walked together to Harborne, a village four miles from Birmingham, where he went to preach on a Sunday, and I to teach in the Sunday School the little I knew. He was imprisoned one year in Warwick Gaol for making speeches on behalf of Chartism.

Another friend of mine, at whose grave I afterwards spoke, was William Lovett. He was imprisoned also one year at the same time as Collins, and in the same gaol. They were both what was known in their days as "Moral Force" Chartists, in contradistinction to "Physical Force" agitators. In those days there was only a middle-class suffrage, composed (as W. J. Fox said in the House of Commons) of the "Worshipful Company of Ten-pound Householders." Moral force was before its time then. Now the people have a free vote, a free platform, a free press, and the ballot-box—if they cannot get what they want without physical force, they do not understand their business. Lovett and Collins composed in prison, and afterwards published, a well-thought-out scheme for the political education of working-class politicians. Collins, like Attwood, Salt, and O'Connor, died from failure of mental power. It was a justification of those who sought redress by violence that, avoiding it and advocating moral force alone, they should be condemned to imprisonment all the same.

"Thomas Cooper, the Chartist," as he proudly wrote on the title-page of his remarkable poem "The Purgatory of Suicides," was imprisoned two years in Stafford Gaol. During fifty years over which our friendship has extended, there has been change of conviction in him, but never of honest principle. Mr. Cooper, likeminded, exceeded Lovett and Collins in the political instruction of the people, and had himself a passion for self-education which has made his name eminent by his attainments. His name is in all booksellers' catalogues, and his praise is in all the

churches. Poems, novels, essays, sermons, are departments of literature in which he has been distinguished.

Henry Vincent appeared among us in John Frost's days. I have the sword which Frost wore when he commenced his ill-fated insurrection in Newport. It was taken from him by Colonel Napier. Vincent was an ardent, inflammatory orator, who said as much against Christianity as against political oppression. All the while he was a Christian at heart, and, like Thomas Cooper, a greater advocate than he was a heretic—being a heretic from indignation rather than from intellectual conviction. Vincent's imprisonment was in Monmouth Gaol. He afterwards was an occasional preacher in Liberal Dissenting churches, but, like all men who have been for a time on the other side, he never returned again to the dark valley of unseeing faith, but dwelt on the hills of orthodoxy, where some light of reason falls. He ultimately acquired a cultivated style of oratory, and became a celebrated lecturer both in England and America. His orations, for the quality of his speeches entitled them to that term, were mainly expositions of political principles. He married, as has been said, the daughter of John Cleave.

Ernest Jones was notable alike for impassioned oratory and poetic inspiration. By birth, culture, and sacrifice, he lent distinction to the Chartist cause he espoused. Thomas Carlyle went to see him through the bars of the prison where he was confined two years. We never knew whether Jones was Hanoverian or English by birth, but he was always English in his advocacy and sympathies. Carlyle had no discernment that he was a man of genius who had resigned affluent prospects for penury and principles, and who, in great vicissitude, never turned back. The only time I ever spoke on Nelson's Monument in Trafalgar Square was in commemoration of his premature death.

Joseph Rayner Stephens, the greatest orator on the Chartist side, was imprisoned in York Castle. Stephens was a Tory, not of the baser sort who seek personal power for purposes of political supremacy, but of the nobler kind who desire to see power in the hands of the wise (which they take themselves to be) for the improvement of the condition and the better contentment of the people. Stephens was for the Crown, but he was for the people, come what might of the Crown

On the platform he was a master of assemblies. In conversation he excelled all men I have known. He saw all that was in the words he used and all round the subject upon which he spoke. His easy precision resembled that of Lord Westbury. Stephens did vehemently teach armed resistance, not against public order, but against public wrong. The Government did not see the distinction—no wonder the people did not.

I had but limited acquaintanceship with Richard Oastler, although great admiration for his personal character. In spite of his Toryism, I had a regard for him, on account of his humanity and real interest in the welfare of factory children. I first knew him when visiting George White at Queen's Bench Prison, where Mr. Oastler was also confined. Like Joseph Rayner Stephens, his great colleague, he cared for throne and factory children, but for children first and children most.

William Prouting Roberts, whom we called the "Miners' Attorney-General," was one who incurred six months' imprisonment at Devizes for his defence of labour. He was the terror of many a local Bench, and defended many a miner and weaver who otherwise had had no redress or deliverance.

The most volcanic voice in the Chartist movement was that of G. J. Mantle. When I was with Mr. J. S. Mill at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, in the Hyde-Park-railing days, Mill could not be heard far into the vast valley of people there assembled ; the outer concourse was lost in the deep shadows of the great hall which two fierce lights on the platform deepened. Then Mantle was chosen to read the resolutions to be passed. His sentences seemed shot from a culverin. His throat opened like the mouth of a tunnel. No doubt the jury heard his defence long before (1839-40), when he was accorded two years' imprisonment for speeches made to Hyde Park Chartists. The judge embellished his sentence by a few graceful words (common among judges, who are never political), saying—"It was you who made seditious speeches, and were a party to the conspiracy and riot. It is true you were not at the latter in body, but your spirit was there ; you sounded the trumpet, but you were not in the van, and it is always so with people like you. You are a young man with a very voluble tongue and an empty head, as most mob orators are. I advise you to study more and speak less—to know, if you can be made

to know, that a boy of twenty-two is not the person to alter the constitution of this country."

George Julian Harney was early in prison. He was in the heart of the Chartist movement, and always a picturesque figure in it. His fervour of speech and his ubiquitous activity made him widely known and popular. It was long hoped he would be the historian of the movement, of which he knew more than any other leader. His first wife, who died early, came from Mauchline. She was tall, beautiful, and of high spirit, a brave counsellor in all risks and a resolute sharer of any consequences. Harney was worthy of the heroic companionship it was his good fortune to possess. His last publication in England was the *Red Republican*, a title which admitted of no mistake, and he was the first Chartist who adopted Louis Blanc's motto—“The Republic, Democratic and Social.”

James, afterwards Alderman, Williams, of Sunderland, was a bookseller, printer, and publicist, and one of the few Chartist agitators in those ardent days who thought that political passion was the better for being controlled by good sense. At Durham Assizes he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He defended himself. The jury had recommended leniency on the ground of his being a young man. Williams said he claimed no consideration on that ground, as what he had done was the result of calm deliberation. He only claimed consideration on the ground of the utility of his public conduct. Williams was counted too intellectual in his advocacy, and fell below the level of orators of passion; but at the bar he was in respect of courage far above most of the men of passion, who, like O'Connor and some others, denied what they had said.

Irish leaders of English political agitation were daring, eloquent, inspiring, impetuous, and dangerous—dangerous because they were impatient, and impatient here because, despairing in their own land, they naturally incited insurgency here which might lead to liberty in Ireland.

Feargus O'Connor, a man more powerfully built than O'Connell, whom he succeeded as a political advocate in England, was imprisoned for two years in York Castle. O'Connor was the most impetuous and most patient of all the tribunes who ever led the English Chartists. In the *Northern Star* he let every rival speak, and had the grand strength of indifference to

what any one said against him in his own columns. Logic was not his strong point, and he had colossal incoherence.

Thomas Ainge Devyr, an energetic and fertile Irish leader of English Chartist, would have been imprisoned a long time by Lord Abinger had he not fled to America. His bail was estreated in his absence. He was the earliest of the advocates of land and landlord reform in Ireland, and claimed, with some truth, to be the originator of the land theories that afterwards became famous. The *Northern Liberator*, edited by him before his flight from Newcastle-on-Tyne to America, was the most readable of all the insurgent newspapers of that period.

James Bronterre O'Brien, who excelled all the Chartist leaders in passion of speech and invective, was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment at the Liverpool Assizes. He was the only Chartist who comprehended fully how large a share, social, financial, and commercial, error contributes to the suffering of the people.

For George White I had as much regard as for any Irish leader among the Chartists. He was so frank, generous, and brave. Whenever the early Socialists were in trouble with their theological adversaries, White would bring up his "Old Guard" and man the hall during a debate to see fair play. In one case in Birmingham they attended five nights, at Beardsworth Repository, from seven to eleven o'clock. Though poor men, they paid for their own admission. He said to me that whenever I was in any danger of ill-usage on the platform I was to send him word and he would bring up the "Old Guard." This he never failed to do. When he was imprisoned in London, my wife used to make pies for him and take them to him at the Queen's Bench. They were very welcome to him, as he always had a precarious revenue. He died ultimately in the Infirmary in Sheffield, I have no doubt dreaming of pies to come, for he was very desolate. He was the personification of energy, physical and mental, possessing a vigorous frame and bright eyes, with a ready, trenchant speech which had the prance of the war-horse in it, neighing for battle. Like other Chartists, he took money from the Tories, the better to enable him to destroy the Whigs, whom he distrusted—because they went tardily on the way of redress. He opposed the Whigs more than he did the Tories, who never set out

that way at all. The father of Lord Cranbrook (it was said by Bradford colleagues), partly from kindness to White, and otherwise for his political services, allowed him many years a small stipend—besides special aid when Anti-Corn Law League meetings required to be broken up.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### *A FURTHER CALENDAR OF FRIENDS WHOSE FATE NEEDS EXPLANATION.*

(1840-1890.)

AMONG the following inhabitants of the prison-house are valued friends and colleagues of my own. Others I knew and had certain relations with, but without approving or condoning what they had done. One whom I was bound by ties of friendship to save if I could, sent me a petition to sign, as I was known to the Minister to whom it was addressed. But I declined, as the plea drawn up by the petitioner justified his act. I did not agree with the justification, and could not ask a minister to condone an offence which a jury had recognized as harmful to the secular interests of the public. At the same time I drew up another petition asking for mitigation of sentence on other grounds which could fairly be pleaded.

Mr. Charles Southwell had been out with Sir de Lacy Evans in the Spanish expedition. He was imprisoned in 1840 for twelve months, in Bristol Gaol, for an article in the *Oracle of Reason*, entitled the "Jew Book." He was sentenced by Sir Charles Wetherell, the "Old Bags" of Hone. I took the vacant editorship and came to a similar end. Mr. Southwell was the youngest of thirty-six children, and was the liveliest of them all. In this he resembled Bishop Bathurst, who was one of thirty-six children by the same father; but Charles Southwell resembled the bishop in no other particular. Mr. Southwell was for some time upon the stage, and was a good actor. He was, like myself, a social missionary lecturing upon Mr. Owen's system of society. He had great versatility— infinite animation, chivalry, and daring. When Bishop Philpotts

intimidated two social missionaries into taking the oath as licensed preachers to avoid certain disabilities, I and Charles Southwell protested against and refused to swear to the thing which was not. On one occasion he undertook to deliver a lecture for the benefit of prisoners in Edinburgh, in the interests of the Anti-Persecution Union. He did lecture, and for an hour and a half a large audience was delighted with his wit, vivacity, and discursiveness. At the conclusion of his address, I said, "Why, Southwell, you never mentioned the subject of your lecture!" He answered, "Well, I quite forgot it." So did we all while he was speaking. He died in Auckland, New Zealand; but though he had ceased to advocate his principles, he maintained them in his death.

George Adams was imprisoned in Gloucester Gaol for publishing the *Oracle of Reason* from friendship for me. Mrs. Harriet Adams, his wife, was also imprisoned for like cause. She was handsome, intelligent, and of invincible spirit. Both died at Watertown, in America.

Miss Matilda Roalfe, at a time when persecution in Edinburgh prevailed, went from London to conduct a small publishing business, though the previous owner of the shop was imprisoned. She also was sentenced to be imprisoned sixty days (1843) for the publication of prohibited Freethought works. She was confined in an unclean cell, and her life was imperilled by religious tumult on her release on bail. On her trial she cross-examined the witness with good judgment. She was told that if she pleaded she was unaware of the nature of the books she sold she might escape. This she would not do. She was instructed by her legal friends that there were serious legal flaws in the proceedings against her. She declined to seek escape on technical grounds, but stood on the right of freedom of the press in honest criticism and speculation. She was as remarkable for quiet courage as for good sense. She made no complaint and no submission. She afterwards became the wife of a valued friend of mine, who, next to my brother Austin, was my most trusted assistant at the Fleet Street house.

Mrs. Emma Martin was another lady distinguished in her day as a platform speaker on questions of social reform, at whose grave I spoke. She suffered brief imprisonments. She was a handsome woman, of brilliant talent and courage.

Thomas Finlay was a man of sixty years of age when I first knew him. He was of good presence, intelligence, and devotion to principle. He made a case with a glass frame and placed in it a copy of the Bible in large type, open at a part which he thought unfit to be found in a sacred book, and placed it where it could be read by passers-by in a main street in Edinburgh. For this he was imprisoned and the Bible also. I have the copy which was sent to me, bearing the imprimatur of the Procurator-Fiscal certifying its legal detention for blasphemy. Finlay defended himself in a speech of considerable length, but was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He had a daughter married to Mr. Henry Robinson, of Edinburgh, who was agent for works I published. He also was imprisoned by the Edinburgh authorities.

Thomas Pooley, the Cornish well-sinker, whom I aided in rescuing from twenty-one months' imprisonment, was an honest, indomitable, incoherent man, whose career the reader may see described in another chapter.

Thomas Paterson was a young Scotchman who also went out with Sir de Lacy Evans in the Spanish expedition, to which Southwell also belonged, but they were unknown to each other at that time. They were afterwards colleagues in the defence of free opinion and underwent similar imprisonment. Paterson's chief imprisonment was in Scotland, where he went as a volunteer during the Edinburgh prosecutions, being imprisoned fifteen months in 1843. While I was a stationed lecturer in Sheffield he lived in my house nine months, and was known as my "curate," as I engaged him to assist me in the schools conducted in connection with my lectureship at the Rockingham Street Hall. No danger and no imprisonment intimidated Paterson. In any project of peril in which I was concerned, he was always a volunteer. For this reason I remained his friend until his death, which brought me trouble, as Paterson published attacks on friends of mine from which I entirely dissented. This he did without my knowing it, but as my friendliness with him was known, I was considered as concurring in his opinion, and thus I lost friends.

Mr. G. W. Foote was imprisoned for publishing Biblical caricatures not worse than the caricatures which theological adversaries deal in without reproach, and, indeed, with popular

approval. Mr. Ramsey, an intelligent and hard-working propagandist, was imprisoned in like manner for selling them. I did what I could to induce Sir Wm. Harcourt to release them on the grounds that, were they chargeable with misplaced ridicule, the consequences fell upon their cause, and it was no business of the State to protect Freethinkers from the excess of their own enthusiasm, and that, since Christians were allowed unbridled license to ridicule their adversaries, and did it, both parties should be imprisoned, or neither.

The most unjust of all prosecutions of the kind was that of Edward Truelove, a man not only of blameless, but honourable life, who had been a bookseller and publisher for nearly half a century. He was imprisoned four months for selling Robert Dale Owen's little work on "Physiology in Relation to Morals"—the most ascetic, reasonably-written of all pamphlets on the limitation of families that have been published for forty years. The sensuality is all on the side of those who object to the principle of such works. Mr. Truelove, though of advanced age, bravely refused to compromise the right of free publication of opinion, and sustained the traditions of the school of Carlile, Watson, and Hetherington.

Mr. J. B. Langley was a publicist with whom I was associated for more than thirty years. He had the passion of public service, and, like all who have it, he neglected his own interest to advance it. He was imprisoned for the violation of an Act never put in force before, and which, if honestly put in operation, would imprison hundreds of persons in the city of London who are counted of good commercial fame, and who would share the same fate. Mr. John Bright and Mr. Samuel Morley contributed to a fund to enable Mr. Langley to go to the coast for a time when free, he having many friends who knew how a forlorn hope or struggling cause could always command his services day or night, near or far. Indeed, it had been better for him had he given more time to his own business and less to the public cause. Mr. Langley was one of the minor poets, as well as a ready public speaker.

Mr. Swindlehurst, a very hard worker for social improvement, was imprisoned in like manner from a like cause.

Robert Southey, who was hanged at Maidstone, was not one of my friends, but I was an adviser of his, and endeavoured to

assist him. He killed seven persons, and was very deservedly executed. I have known many who earned the gallows in their effort to obtain notoriety, but Southey was the only one who chose it for that purpose.

Gerald Supple, named elsewhere, a journalistic colleague, was sentenced to be hanged for shooting two persons and killing the wrong one. He had ability, chivalry, and courage worthy of his country. He came from Dublin.

Rudolph Herzl was a tall, thoughtful-looking secretary to a Secular Society at Leeds. Ardent, intelligent, enthusiastic, devoted, always ready to go to the front, he offered himself to me to serve on any forlorn hope, in conspiracy or battle. I declined to dispose of any man's life, and did no more on his request than inform him where conflict was impending, but the choice of entering upon it must be his own. He afterwards went out during the Italian war, and was no more heard of by me.

One whom I do not name, but who had many claims on my regard, got involved in the unwise defence of some persons, unknown to me, in serious railway robberies. I have no doubt he acted from some mistaken sense of justice, and wrote a letter intimidatory of the authorities who were investigating the robberies, with which he could not possibly have been concerned. One morning I saw in *The Times* a lithographed letter with an offer of £300 reward for discovery of the writer. I knew at a glance who he was and remonstrated with him. He wrote, with a fearless defiance natural to him, saying, he knew I needed money, and that I was quite at liberty to give information as to the authorship of the letter, and he not only should not reproach me, but be glad if he could be of service to me. My answer was that I never took blood-money, especially that of one I had treated as a friend. He was imprisoned several times subsequently, but never on that or any similar account, and sometimes from causes creditable to him. A curious thing occurred in connection with the letter referred to. Having to go to Scotland I took his self-inculpating letter and a copy of *The Times* containing the lithograph letter with me, intending to give both to him. I never removed them from my trunk. Some days after my arrival at my destination I sought them, but they, alas! were not there. In what way they could have been abstracted or lost I never could make out. My anxiety

lest they had fallen into dangerous hands was very great. What became of them I never knew. Fortunately nothing resulted from their loss.

Now, I have fulfilled my promise to justify my assertion that I have had so many questionable friends that the reader might feel reasonable alarm at continuing the perusal of these pages. In this and the two preceding chapters I have enumerated sixty-eight persons in whom the State took personal interest. In enumerating those who were hanged, I have said nothing of others who, in the opinion of confident, if not competent observers, ought to have ended that way. But every man who had knowledge of public affairs knows a great number of these also. I have confined myself, with one or two exceptions, to those who nobly incurred peril. In my memory are many more whom, perhaps, I ought to mention ; but I have cited enough to prove my intimation that I am a person of suspicious acquaintances. But it is a good rule in autobiography, as in debate, to state your case, clear your case, prove your case, and then cease. To do more is to weary the reader, and that is the prime crime a writer can commit.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *THE FOUNDER OF SOCIAL IDEAS IN ENGLAND.*

(1841-1858.)

HAVING been for more than half a century concerned in the advocacy of Robert Owen's "New Views of Society," which attracted a band of adherents when first announced, I think it is relevant that I should give some account of this class of social ideas.

Just as Thomas Paine was the founder of political ideas among the people of England, Robert Owen was also the founder of social ideas among them. He who first conceives a new idea has merit and distinction ; but he is the founder of it who puts it into the minds of men by proving its practicability. Mr. Owen did this at New Lanark, and convinced numerous persons that the improvement of society was possible by wise material means. There were social ideas in England before the days of Owen, as there were political ideas before the days of Paine ; but Owen gave social ideas form and force. His passion was the organization of labour, and to cover the land with self-supporting cities of industry, in which well-devised material condition should render ethical life possible, in which labour should be, as far as possible, done by machinery, and education, recreation, and competence should be enjoyed by all. Instead of communities working for the world, they should work for themselves, and keep in their own hands the fruit of their labour ; and commerce should be an exchange of surplus wealth, and not a necessity of existence. All this Owen believed to be practicable. At New Lanark he virtually or indirectly supplied to his workpeople, with splendid munificence and practical

judgment, all the conditions which gave dignity to labour. Excepting by Godin of Guise, no workmen have ever been so well treated, instructed, and cared for as at New Lanark.

Co-operation as a form of social amelioration and of profit existed in an intermittent way before New Lanark ; but it was the advantages of the stores Owen incited that was the beginning of working-class co-operation. His followers intended the store to be a means of raising the industrious class, but many think of it now merely as a means of serving themselves. Still, the nobler portion are true to the earlier ideal of dividing profits in store and workshop, of rendering the members self-helping, intelligent, honest, and generous, and abating, if not superseding competition and meanness.

During all the discussions upon Mr. Owen's views, I do not remember notice being taken of Thomas Holcroft, the actor, who might have been cited as a precursor of Mr. Owen. Holcroft, mostly self-taught, familiar with hardship, vicissitude, and adventure, became an author, actor, and playwriter of distinction. He expressed views of remarkable similarity to those of Owen. Holcroft was a friend of political and moral improvement, but he wished it to be gradual and rational, because he believed no other could be effectual. He deplored all provocation and invective. All that he wished was the free and dispassionate discussion of the great principles relating to human happiness, trusting to the power of reason to make itself heard, not doubting the result. He believed the truth had a natural superiority over error, if truth could only be stated ; that if once discovered it must, being left to itself, soon spread and triumph. "Men," he said, "do not become what by nature they are meant to be, but what society makes them."

Actors, apart from their profession, are mostly idealess ; and the few who are capable of interest in human affairs outside the stage, are mostly so timid of their popularity that they are acquiescent, often subservient, to conventional ideas. Not so Holcroft. When it was dangerous to have independent theological or social opinions, he was as bold as Owen at a later day. He did not conceal that he was a Necessarian. He was one of a few moralists who took a chapel in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, with a view to found an Ethical Church. One of his sayings was this : "The only enemy I encounter is error, and

that with no weapon but words. My constant theme has been, 'Let error be taught, not whipped.' " Owen but put this philosophy into a system, and based public agitation upon the Holcroft principle. Owen's habit of mind and principle are there expressed. Lord Brougham, in his famous address to the Glasgow University in 1825, declared the same principle when he said no man was any more answerable for his belief than for the height of his stature or the colour of his hair. Brougham, being a life-long friend of Owen, had often heard this from him. Holcroft was born 1745, died 1809.

Robert Owen was a remarkable instance of a man at once Tory and revolutionary. He held with the government of the few, but, being a philanthropist, he meant that the government of the few should be the government of the good. It cannot be said that he, like Burke, was incapable of conceiving the existence of good social arrangements apart from kings and courts. It may be said that he never thought upon the subject. He found power in their hands, and he went to them to exercise it in the interests of his "system." He was conservative as respected their power, but conservative of nothing else. He would revolutionize both religion and society—indeed, clear the world out of the way—to make room for his "new views." He visited the chief courts of Europe. Because nothing immediately came of it, it was said he was not believed in. But there is evidence that he was believed in. He was listened to because he proposed that crowned heads should introduce his system into their states, urging that it would ensure contentment and material comfort among their people, and by giving rulers the control and patronage of social life, would secure them in their dignity.

Owen's fine temper was owing to his principle. He always thought of the unseen chain which links every man to his destiny. His fine manners were owing to natural self-possession and to his observation. When a youth behind Mr. McGuffog's counter at Stamford, the chief draper's shop in the town, he "watched the manners and studied the characters of the nobility when they were under the least restraint." It never fell to me to entertain many eminent men, even by accident; but the first was Robert Owen. His object was to meet a professor and some young students at the London University.

Two of them were Mr. Percy Greg and Mr. Michael Foster, both of whom afterwards became eminent. There were some publicists present, and Mr. W. J. Birch, author of the "Philosophy and Religion of Shakspeare," all good conversationalists. Mr. Owen was the best talker of the party. Perhaps it was that they deferred to him, or submitted to him, because of his age and public career; but he displayed more variety and vivacity than they. He spoke naturally as one who had authority. But his courtesy was never suspended by his earnestness. Owen, being a Welshman, had all the fervour and pertinacity, without the impetuosity of his race. Though he had made his own fortune by insight and energy, his fine manners came by instinct. He was successively a draper's counterman, a clerk, a manager, a trader and manufacturer; but he kept himself free from the hurry and unrest of manner which the eagerness of gain and the solicitude of loss, impart to the commercial class, and which mark the difference between their manners and those of gentlemen. There are both sorts in the House of Commons. As a rule, you know on sight the members who have made their own fortunes. If you accost them, they are apt to start as though they were arrested. An interview is an encroachment. They do not conceal that they are thinking of their time as they answer you. They look at their minutes as though they were loans, and only part with them if they are likely to bear interest. There are business men in Parliament who are born with the instinct of progress without hurry. But they are the exception.

A gentleman has no master, and is neither driven nor hurries as though he had some one to obey. Mr. Owen had this charm of repose. He had a clear and abiding conception that men had no substantial interest in being base; and that when they were base, it was an intrinsic misfortune arising from inherited tendency, or acquired from contact with untoward circumstances. This belief made him patient with dishonesty; but dishonesty never blinded him nor imposed upon him. He could see as far into a rogue as any man. His theory of the influences of heredity and circumstances gave him a key to character. Miss Martineau had frequent visits from Mr. Owen, who, she said, "always interested her by his candour and cheerfulness. His benevolence and charming manners would make him the most

popular man in England if he could but distinguish between assertion and argument, and refrain from wearying his friends with his monotonous doctrine." It is a peculiarity in some Welshmen that, if refuted in argument and they admit the refutation to be conclusive, their previous conviction returns to them, and they reassert it as though it had never been answered. I observed this in Welshmen in America, where there is no market for abandoned ideas, and no time for returning to errors. Mr. Owen had this recurrency of anterior ideas, but in him it seemed earnestness rather than mere iteration. Besides, it was consistency in him, seeing that he never thought confutation of his views possible, and never met with it.

Because he insisted on these far-reaching principles, which were sufficient to recast the social policy of the nation, he was described disparagingly as "a man of one idea." I never shared this objection to persons of one idea, having known so many who had none. Many people have but fragments of ideas, and no complete conception of any.

Mr. Owen's fault was that he repeated his great idea in the same words. It is variety of statement of the same thing—if there be truth in it—which conquers conviction.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHILOSOPHER OF NEW LANARK.*

(1841-1858.)

MR. OWEN's sense of fame lay in his ideas. They formed a world in which he dwelt, and he thought others who saw them would be as enchanted as he was. But others did not see them, and he took no adequate means to enable them to see them. James Mill and Francis Place revised his famous "Essays on the Formation of Character," of which he sent a copy to the first Napoleon. Mr. Owen published nothing else so striking or vigorous. Yet he could speak on the platform impressively and with a dignity and force which commanded the admiration of cultivated adversaries.

Like Turner, Owen had an earlier and a later manner. His memoirs—never completed—were written apparently when Robert Fulton's death was recent. They have incident, historic surprises, and the charm of genuine autobiography ; but when he wrote of his principles, he lacked altogether Cobbett's faculty of "talking with the pen," which is the source of literary engagingness. It was said of Montaigne that "his sentences were vascular and alive, and if you pricked them they bled." If you pricked Mr. Owen's, when he wrote on his "System," you lost your needle in the wool. He had the altruistic fervour as strongly as Comte, but Owen was without the artistic instinct of style, which sees an inapt word as a false tint in a picture or as an error in drawing.

His "Lectures on Marriage" he permitted to be printed in a note-taker's unskilful terms, and did not correct them, which

subjected him and his adherents also to misapprehension. Everybody knows that love must always be free, and, if left to take its own course, is generally ready to accept the responsibility of its choice. People will put up with the ills they bring upon themselves, but will resent happiness proposed by others ; just as a nation will be more content with the bad government of their own contriving than they will be under better laws imposed upon them by foreigners. Polygamous relations are inconsistent with delicacy or refinement. Miscellaneousness and love are incompatible terms. Love is an absolute preference. Mr. Owen regarded affection as essential to chastity ; but his depreciation of priestly marriages set many against marriage itself. This was owing more to the newness of his doctrine in those days, which led to misconception on the part of some, and was wilfully perverted by others. He claimed for the poor facilities of divorce equal to those accorded to the rich. To some extent this has been conceded by law, which has tended to increase marriage by rendering it less a terror. The new liberty produced license, as all new liberty does ; yet the license is not chargeable upon the liberty, nor upon those who advocated it : but upon the reaction from unlimited bondage.

Owen's philanthropy was owing to his principles. Whether wealth is acquired by chance or fraud—as a good deal of wealth is—or owing to inheritance without merit, or to greater capacity than other men have, it is alike the gift of destiny, and Mr. Owen held that those less fortunate should be assisted to improvement in their condition by the favourites of fate. Seeing that every man would be better than he is were his condition in life devised for his betterment, Owen's advice was not to hate men, but to change the system which makes them what they are or keeps them from moral advancement. For these reasons he was against all attempts at improvement by violence. Force was not reformation. In his mind reason and better social arrangements were the only remedy.

In the autumn of 1845 I sent to Mr. Owen (he being then in America) a copy of my first book on his social philosophy, and the method of stating it on the platform. It was entitled "Rationalism," treated from an Individualist point of view. Mr. Owen's party were then known as "Rational Religionists." Solicitous of the opinion of the master, I asked him, in case he

approved of it, to please to tell me so, and permit me to say so. In 1848, he being again in England, I sent him a further copy, as possibly the other never reached him. He kindly answered as follows:—

“Cox's HOTEL, JERMYN STREET,

“March 18, 1848.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your note, papers, and book, which came here last night only, although your note is dated 3rd inst. I am just now overwhelmed with most important public business, which will more than occupy every moment of my time until I return from Paris. As soon as I shall have leisure for both reading and study, I will attend to your 'Rationalism,' and give my opinion of it.

“Yours, my dear sir,

“Very truly and affectionately,

“ROBT. OWEN.

“P.S.—Keep up the type of the first 500 copies” [alluding to a work I was printing for him].

Always intent on the diffusion of his views, I conclude he never found time to give me the opinion I sought.

In another letter he had told me that Mr. Cobden had presented to Parliament a petition from him. I do not possess any letter in which he referred to the opinion he promised to give me; but I inferred from his continued friendship that he did not much dissent from what I had said in “Rationalism,” or he would have made time to do so; for when, in a proof of an article I had sent him (he contributed several to the *Reasoner* I was then editing), his sharp eye detected the words “misery, producing circumstances,” he desired me to tell the printer to remove the comma and put a hyphen in its place, that it might read “misery-producing circumstances.” On one occasion he held £10 scrip in the Fleet Street house.

In 1847, Mr. Owen was a candidate for the representation of Marylebone. The principles he offered to advocate are notable to-day, as showing how well he understood the political needs of the nation, and how much he was in advance of his times:—

1. A graduated property tax equal to the national expenditure.

2. The abolition of all other taxes.
3. No taxation without representation.
4. Free trade with all the world.
5. National education for all who desire it.
6. National beneficial employment for all who require it.
7. Full and complete freedom of religion under every name by which men may call themselves.
8. A national circulating medium, under the supervision and control of Parliament, that could be increased or diminished as wealth for circulation increased or diminished ; and that should be, by its ample security, unchangeable in its value.
9. National military training for all male children in schools, that the country may be protected against foreign invasion, without the present heavy permanent military expenditure.

Mr. Owen was afterwards a candidate for the City of London. I, being a freeman, was one of his nominators, and attended at the Guildhall, at his request, to propose or second him on the day of election.

For many weeks I published an advertisement of the commencement of the Millennium in 1855. This I continued at his request until March 25th. But up to quarter day no sign of it appeared. I received payment for the advertisement in the *Reasoner*, which, had I believed the Millennium was so near, I should not have taken.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE OWEN FAMILY.

MR. OWEN had three sons who had distinction in their day. One was employed by the United States Government on geological survey of territories, another fought in the war of the Rebellion, and died by injudiciously tasting embalming water, brought to him for analysis. Robert Dale, his eldest son, came to be United States Minister at Naples, and delighted King Bomba with spiritual *séances* until Garibaldi swept the tyrant and the spirits away. The minister's daughter Rosamond became Mrs. Oliphant—a bright young lady who wrote a singularly wise pamphlet on the Rights of Women.

American papers, who best knew the facts concerning Robert Dale Owen, explained that for a period before his death he suffered from excitement of the brain, ascribed to overwork in his youth. He was, from his youth upward, a man of absolute moral courage, and to the end of his days he maintained the reputation of it. As soon as he was deceived by the Spiritist, Katie King, he published a card and said so, and warned people not to believe what he had said about that fascinating impostor. A man of less courage would have said nothing, in the hope that the public would the sooner forget it. It is clear now, that spiritism did not affect his mind ; his mind was affected before he presented gold rings to feminine spirits. Towards the end of his days he fancied himself the Marquis of Breadalbane, and proposed coming over to Scotland to take possession of his estates. He had a great scheme for recasting the art of war by raising armies of gentlemen only, and proposed himself to go to the then raging East and settle things there on a very superior plan. He believed himself in posses-

sion of extraordinary powers of riding and fighting, and had a number of amusing illusions. But he was not a common madman ; he was mad like a philosopher—he had a picturesque insanity. After he had charmed his friends by his odd speculations, he would spend a few days in analyzing them, and wondering how they arose in his mind. He very coolly and skilfully dissected his own crazes. The activity of the brain had become at times uncontrollable ; still his was a very superior kind of aberration. In politics, Robert Dale Owen was not a force so much as an ornament, and never fulfilled the promise of his youth in being a leader of men. In his Freethought writings he excelled all his contemporaries in finish of expression.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *THE MYSTERIOUS PARCEL LEFT AT THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" OFFICE.*

(1841.)

WHEN a book was issued some years ago in London, in defence of small families, it bore a disagreeable title, and I suggested to the author that "Elements of Social Science" would be a better one, which he adopted. Afterwards Prof. Newman pointed out in his discerning way, in letters to the *Reasoner*, that the author's doctrine included a principle which would lead to evil: as it implied that seduction might be a physiological necessity. The merciful aim of the work was so far frustrated by its execution. To any similar work the objection made by me related solely to its expression. This I made clear in the book "John Stuart Mill, as the Working Classes knew him." On a question such as family limitation, delicacy of phrase and purity of taste are everything. They are themselves safeguards of morality. Foolishness of thought, coarseness of illustration, deter from acts of the highest prudence and repel instead of attracting serious attention.

Nations, as well as persons, are on some subjects comparatively without the sense of taste. Joseph Barker, whom many readers know, was entirely deficient in it. In his first book, "Memoirs of a Man," he gave incredible and unquotable instances of it, and elsewhere also. Americans, as a rule, are far less reticent on domestic questions than Englishmen. Scotland is notable in the same way; I have heard at public assemblies there things said before a mixed audience, by educated persons, which no class in England could anywhere

be found to utter. We have reservation it is not well to disregard, since it is a sentiment of civilization, and means moral refinement. It was from Scotland this subject first came into England. In these days of Board schools and science lectures, physiology can be explained to girls, whatever they need to know, by lady physicians. Youths should be taught by a medical professor in the same way ; and no course of education should be considered complete until a series of select class lectures had been given, so that domestic knowledge should be insured of all that can affect, for good or evil, the future of the human race.

In 1874-5, I was engaged in writing the "History of Co-operation in England," when I became acquainted with a curious episode in the career of the founder of that system.

Robert Owen, finding the world in manifest disorder, suggested how it might be put straight. Looking at it with an intelligent and benevolent eye, he saw that crime was error, and that misery was crime—in other words, that misery was preventable, and that it was a crime in rulers to permit it. He was the first publicist amongst us who looked with royal eyes upon children. He regarded grown persons as proprietors of the world, bound to extend the rights of hospitality to all visitors. He considered little children as little guests, to be welcomed with gentle courtesy and tenderness, to be offered knowledge and love, and charmed with song and flowers, so that they might be glad, and proud that they had come into a world which gave them happiness and only asked from them goodness.

Mr. Owen began his career as a reformer—in what we regard now as the pre-scientific period—before men measured progress by single steps. As Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar expressed it with admirable comprehensiveness—"Mr. Owen looked to nothing less than to renovate the world, to extirpate all evil, to banish all punishment, to create like views and like wants, to guard against all conflicts and hostilities." There is grandeur in this wide horizon of social effort, which will always have inspiration in it. Finding pious benevolence, seeking progress by prayer—which did not bring it—Mr. Owen boldly proposed to substitute for it scientific benevolence, which seeks human improvement by material methods. "Here," he said, if not in

terms, in theory, "is the new path of deliverance, where no thought is lost, no effort vain ; where the victory is always to the wise and the patient, and the poor who are wise will no longer be betrayed."

We know not now what courage it required to say this. When Mr. Owen said it, gentlemen expected to provide the poor with their religion. If they subscribed to any school, this was the chief object they had in view ; for it was very little secular learning they imparted. In Sunday schools, spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic were given in homœopathic doses, and they were generally subordinated to the Catechism. Mr. Owen gave lessons in the knowledge of the world in his schools, and justified their being given. Both the clergy and dissenting ministers regarded with jealousy any influence arising not under their direction, and they made it difficult for social improvers to do anything. They gave bad accounts of any working men who allied themselves to social schemes, so that inquirers were intimidated. It was a great merit of Mr. Owen that he did more to resent this, and inspire others to deliver society from it, than any other man of wealth in his time.

In those alarmed days, when politicians and capitalists were as terrified as shopkeepers at the progress of co-operation, Mr. Owen, not content with spreading disquiet among the clergy, threw a new alarm into the midst of conventional conservatism, which has strangely passed out of the sight of history. Mr. James Mill had written in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" that it was both desirable and possible to limit the families of the poor. He held the opinion that it ought to be done, and that the poor should see to it. He despised working people who crowded the labour market with their offspring, and then complained of the lowness of wages and want in their homes, where there were more hungry mouths than food.

Certainly man or woman entering the office of a parish overseer to be questioned with suspicion, relieved with reluctance, treated as a burden on the parish, and advised to emigrate (as the shopkeeper naturally begrudges the flesh on their bones which he has to pay for), is a humiliating business, so shocking and deplorable that those who come to this state had better never have been born. Any legitimate remedy which the wit of man could devise would seem purity and

dignity by the side of this degradation. Those who undertook to make communities soon found that the inmates would come to certain ruin if overrun with children, and they listened to James Mill's warning, and not his alone. The *Edinburgh Review* was quite as emphatic and more explicit to the same end than the "Encyclopædia." Mr. Owen, who always gave heed to the philosophers, circulated papers addressed "To the married of the working people," warning them of their danger. His courage and thoroughness was wonderful. No man had a better right than he to invent the maxim he was fond of using, "Truth without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man." He was not better able, peradventure, than other men to obtain truth free from error ; but he was beyond question as free from fear of man in moral things as any publicist who ever lived. It was stated in the *Black Dwarf*, by several correspondents, that this was so. Mr. Richard Carlile wrote a letter from Dorchester Gaol, which was published, stating that if Mr. Owen was written to "he would proudly admit to any one" that families should be manageable. Mr. Jonathan Wooler, the editor, treated the statement as a fact.

The *Black Dwarf* stated that "Mr. Owen had become a convert to Mr. Malthus's views as to the danger of population, and had been to France to learn in what way French families were limited. He consulted the most eminent physicians of France upon the subject, as he was alarmed at the result of large families in communities." He made known the result of his inquiries in 1822. The following year, a packet of papers upon this subject was sent to No. 5, Water Lane, Fleet Street, London, where Mr. Richard Carlile then had a shop, with a request that he would forward it as directed ; after the manner of booksellers, he did so, and no mean commotion shortly followed, the noise of which was long heard in the land, and reverberations occurred in *The Times* as late as 1873.<sup>1</sup>

In September, 1823, as Mr. John Edward Taylor, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, was sitting at dinner, with Mr.

<sup>1</sup> This referred to the article by Mr. A. Hayward, of malicious memory, who accused Mr. J. S. Mill of complicity in this affair, which Mill indignantly denied. In 1849, Mr. J. A. Roebuck, believing Mr. Hayward had made similar accusation against him, challenged Mr. Hayward to a duel. Mr. Hayward sent me a pamphlet which showed that he had been acquitted of Mr. Roebuck's charge at the time.

Jeremiah Garnett and other gentlemen, a messenger, whom he had sent to his office, 29, Market Street, for letters that might come in by the evening mails, brought him, besides the letters, a parcel which had come by coach, directed to him at the *Guardian* office. The direction was written on an envelope, and within was an anonymous note, requesting him respectfully to have the parcel delivered to Mrs. Mary Fildes, No. 3, Comet Street, Manchester. The writer gave as his reason for troubling Mr. Taylor that he was not sure of the lady's address. Mr. Taylor, not knowing the handwriting, asked a London guest at the table "if it were the handwriting of any of the London Radicals." Mr. Taylor reading the note, and not opening the parcel, and knowing nothing of its contents, ordered it to be delivered to Mrs. Fildes, who, astounded at what she found in it, and being a capable woman, active in things political, and able to write a good letter, wrote demanding an explanation of Mr. Taylor. She subsequently sent one of the papers to Sir Robert Giffard, Knight, the then Attorney-General, saying that in her opinion "the morals of society would be completely destroyed by them." A year or two later Mrs. Fildes thought differently upon the subject, and with her customary decision said so. It appears from the *Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle*, published in London at that period, that similar papers had been sent among the Spitalfields weavers. Mr. Owen never denied the statement that the papers originally "emanated from him." Mr. Place, who preserved the publications in which the foregoing facts are recorded, left nothing from Mr. Owen—so far as I can find—decidedly in reference to it. Indeed, as Owen himself, when editor of the *Crisis*, announced nine years later, namely, October 27, 1832, that his son, Robert Dale, had published a book upon the same subject, and to the same effect, there is no reason to suppose that he intended to contradict the allegation in question. Sir R. Giffard is understood to have taken steps to discover the actual distributors of the papers, and curious traditions have existed as to his success. In 1849, as I have said, an attempt was made to connect J. A. Roebuck with the distribution. In 1873, twenty-five years later, Mr. John Stuart Mill was said to have been one of the parties, probably because his father held strong opinions on this question. No conjecture has been

too wild to obtain circulation at the clubs, as distance of time rendered certainty difficult. Mr. Mill, who neither agreed with Mr. Owen's communism, nor with his son Robert Dale Owen's book on the subject in question, was specially exempted from persons probable. Mr. Owen, who was publicly known to be an actor in the matter, has altogether escaped these charges. It is proof of his wonderful fearlessness that he meddled with this question at all, and it is no less wonderful that, amid all the fertility and hostility of the Anti-Socialist adversaries who attacked Mr. Owen's "systems," this special charge was never made.

The venerable vindictiveness and educated malevolence which pursued Mr. Mill, spared Mr. Owen, nor does it appear to have influenced the eminent friends who acted with Mr. Owen, and to whom everything was known. His theological criticism was remembered against him, and thus Mr. Owen experienced the reality of the maxim of Thomas, that "the propagation of new truths affecting clerical dogmas is the last crime that men forgive."

Beyond any gentleman of his time, Mr. Owen cared for the friendless, regardless of himself. This question concerned none save the poor, and he boldly counselled them not to be coerced by opprobrium into supplying offspring to be ground up alive in the mill of capital, or to be cast aside when the labour market was glutted, to fall into the hands of the constable or the parish overseer.

No notice of this curious and characteristic episode in Mr. Owen's life occurs in the biographies of him which have appeared since his death—not even in the "Life and Times of Robert Owen" by his disciple Lloyd Jones. Nothing is said of it in Sargent's "Life of Robert Owen," containing a variety of facts which it must have taken considerable research and cost to accumulate. Though Mr. Sargent's views were unsympathetic and antagonistic, he never calumniated, although he often failed to judge accurately points which an alien historian could hardly be expected to understand; but as he was never dull, never indecisive, and often was right in the opinions he formed, he was an instructive writer to those who incline to the side of the innovators, and must have considerably increased the curiosity of the public of his generation, who regarded Mr.

Owen, if they knew him at all, as an heresiarch whose proceedings have been unknown in polite society.

In 1840, I left the employment in which until my twenty-third year I was engaged. For a while I was an assistant teacher in a private school in Moor Street, Birmingham. For a year I had charge of the books and correspondence of Mr. Pemberton, a brother of Charles Reece Pemberton, a Venetian wire blind maker. Some time I wrote technical treatises for mechanics who were masters of their craft, but not used to the pen. A publisher had engaged them to supply handbooks by reason of their known skill. After they had told their story in their own way, I retold it for them and they shared their payment with me. At one time I wrote advertisements for an eminent firm whom I persuaded that to tell the truth in them would be the greatest novelty out. I did what I could to combine picturesqueness with veracity, and received 7s. 6d. for each advertisement. The same firm still advertises or I should give their names. At intervals of years I have seen some of my old work among announcements of fashionable commodities.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *FIRST LECTURESHIP.*

(1841.)

PERSONS favourable to the organization of the social state, whom Robert Owen had incited to action, came to be called "Socialists." Mr. Cobden spoke at times in the House of Commons in condemnation of them without appearing to be aware that there never were any agitators in England of the kind he had in his mind. Continental Socialists meditated rearranging society by force. There never were in England any philanthropists of the musket and the knife. English Socialists expected to improve society by showing the superior reasonableness of the changes they sought. A small branch of these propagandists existed in Worcester. An enthusiastic carpenter had enlarged and fitted up an oblong workshop as a lecture-room, some sympathisers—who never appeared in the hall—furnished means of purchasing materials. These humble lecture-rooms were called "Halls of Science," not that we had much science—merely a preference for it. A less pretentious name would have better pleased me, but it proclaimed our intention of permitting science to be explained on Sundays, when any one among us had any to explain. I, who held that Science was the Providence of Life, agreed with this use of Sunday. In those days science was regarded by theologians as a form of sin. Occasionally we had little festivals of the families of members. Once laughing gas—then a new thing—was administered for amusement. The effect upon the carpenter was quite unexpected ; he turned somersaults all down the hall, and downstairs out into the open. Being a heavy man, this unforeseen performance

produced consternation. One of the auditors at this hall became a scientific balloonist, and his name was known over Europe. My first lectureship was at this hall, at a salary of 16s. a week. Socialist salaries were not of a nature to tempt any one to act against his conscience ; but my convictions lying that way, I accepted the appointment. One advantage was that my family, though it consisted of only three persons, found themselves under favourable circumstances for acquiring the art of economy. I had never heard of D'Alembert's motto, "Liberty, Truth, Poverty." I soon saw that they went together in propagandism, but I did not give heed to that.

At first my family resided in Birmingham, which involved a walk of twenty-six miles to visit them. On days when I returned to lecture at night, I used to find that on the first stage to Bromgrove (thirteen miles) I could arrange pretty clearly the order of my intended discourse, while on the second thirteen miles my grasp of the subject seemed weaker ; but the cause of that did not occur to me. Eventually we all resided in Worcester, where, by the introduction of a lady friendly to the "cause" I increased my income by teaching mathematics to a ladies' school, where I was known as Mr. Jacobs, as my own name would have carried alarming associations with it.

After six months, I was proposed as an accredited lecturer, of the "Socialist" movement. The general body was known as the "Association of all Classes of all Nations," which would have been a very considerable society if it had ever answered to its name. It took a second title, that of "Rational Religionists," to which there were many objections—as few would believe in a *rational* religion, and more thought that "rationality" savoured too much of carnal reason. There was a central board for the government of the party, and every year there was a congress at which ten or twelve stationed lecturers were appointed to the chief branches. The term "congress" was an American term introduced by William Pare, and had not been in popular use in England. When the question of my appointment came to be considered, objection was taken to my voice as wanting in strength. The objection would have been fatal had it not been for Mr. J. L. Murphy, an influential Irish member of the board, who said my voice was as strong as that of Lalor Sheil, which could be very well heard by a meeting willing to

listen. Others concluded that, in a party widely credited with subversive and dangerous purposes, an unaggressive voice like mine might confuse prejudice, if it did not disarm it. The result was that I was appointed by the Manchester Congress of 1841, Station Lecturer at Sheffield.

The title given to such persons was "Social Missionary," and some wrote "S.M." after their names. The Sheffield branch wanted a lecturer who was willing also to teach a day school, and for these double duties of speaking three times a week and teaching every day the salary was 30s. To conduct the school more effectually I provided an assistant at my own cost, as I approved of branches having good schools. My assistant was Thomas Paterson, the young Scotchman already mentioned.

Sometimes by small articles for papers, sometimes by a preface to an author's book, sometimes by revising a technical treatise for a writer who had knowledge without words, and by now and then giving private lessons in Euclid, I brought a little increase to the household funds. Once I was selected to deliver the anniversary lectures in Huddersfield, for which travelling expenses were given, and by walking the distance the fare was so much gain. The journey to Huddersfield was thirty miles, and nearing the town I found my mind, which had been very alert on setting out, had become limp. On the Sunday morning when I had first to speak it had not recovered, and it was night before my voice was clear and my ordinary animation returned. I had too little physiological knowledge to know then that great fatigue affected the mind as well as the body, and that physical exhaustion rendered efforts of thought impossible.

It was in Sheffield that I published my first pamphlet, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Trades Unions." I began with the conviction that it was of little use suggesting improvement in anything until you had shown that you comprehended the good there is already in the thing to be supplemented or superseded. This brought me the acquaintance of Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law Rhymer. I had adapted two lines from one of his poems—

"O pallid want ! O labour stark !  
Behold ! behold ! the second Ark—  
The Land ! The Land !"

Instead of "The Land" I substituted "Co-operation." Ellicott sent me a friendly protest against changing his terms and destroying his metre, and an invitation to breakfast.

Once, at a public meeting in Sheffield at which I spoke, Elliott rose and said words of me—he being generous and I the advocate of an unpopular party—which would have ruined me had I believed them. His modesty towards himself, his affluence of praise to others, was shown in his saying to Joseph Barker : "I give you brass, you give me gold." It was the reverse in fact. But when he *wrote* criticism or praise, it could always be trusted—he kept close to proportion and truth. My chief friends in Sheffield, outside the Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, were Mr. John Fowler, who was chosen by Mr. Fox and Serjeant Talfourd to write the life of Pemberton ; and Mr. Paul Rodgers, a local poet. One day we all went to the house Ebenezer Elliott had built for himself. He gave us a country luncheon, and strolled with us down the path which he had celebrated in his "Wonders of the Lane." As my hearers in Rockingham Street Hall were Communists, he made merriment for me by repeating his clever lines—

" What is a Communist ? One who hath yearnings  
For equal division of unequal earnings.  
Idler or bungler, or both, he is willing  
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling."

This was the newspaper definition. The English Communists were exactly opposite. They had a passion for industry, and sought only an equitable division of profits. I valued the society of wits and men of higher cultivation. Neither missionaries nor preachers acquire robust views who live always in the confined atmosphere of their congregations.

Nothing save a strong propagandist predilection would have led me to accept an appointment for which I had little popular qualification. With a bold voice and good presence a little sense goes a long way ; with some audiences it goes all the way. If a splendid voice is accompanied by splendid sense, the orator becomes invincible, as was Gambetta with his voice of storm, thunder, and energy—the mere report of which still echoes in European ears. A striking gesture, a new tone, will sometimes make the fortune of a speech. But without resonance of voice

the tone which charms the ear may not occur. I had nothing to recommend me but the passion of persuasion and the aim of usefulness. For many years the fault beset me of crowding too many objects on the canvas of my speeches. The main subject was then indeterminate. Fortunately, there are always some bird-minded hearers in every assembly—who think in the air. Their good time is when a speaker talks over the heads of his audience—as they are just in the way to catch what he says. Mr. Anthony Young, who afterwards resided with me, then an actor in Sheffield, made me a character in a pantomime. I did not know it when I entered the theatre, and was surprised at the clever personation of myself. Young, with the discernment of the stage, told me I squandered points by not stopping to make them. This was a defect in art. I knew this, and in 1846 purchased a portrait of Talleyrand, which ever after hung in my writing room. Mazzini described him as the “greatest liar in Europe”; but he did not lie in a hurry, and acted on the maxim of “never doing to-day what might by any possibility be put off till to-morrow.” His unhasting face was a charm allaying my futile impetuosity. Swinbourne the tragedian, Weitling the German Communist, Wendell Phillips, and one or two great preachers told me they found incitement in a book on “Public Speaking” I wrote; but it was long before I was successful with hearers, and then only in assemblies within the compass of my voice.

Yet I had some instinct of art. I admired Robespierre—not on account of principles ascribed to him, but because he used one sized paper, and wrote out himself all his speeches in a large and careful hand. No one can do that without detecting verbiage, irrelevance, and limpness of expression. But though I knew the plan to be good, I have never had time to follow it.

Whatever art I had, or could acquire, my audiences had need of it. There are various classes of hearers. One have capacity, and thirst for new ideas, and know what to do with them when they get them. Another class have only room for one idea at a time in their heads, and if they by chance get a new one, it puts out the one they had. Generally the new idea is non-insertable. They are such persons as Sojourner Truth once met, of whom she said in her discerning way, “I would have

told them something, only I saw they had nowhere to put it." A third class, very numerous, have sandy brains. The soil of their minds is loose, and nothing takes root in it. Some brains require a chemical treatment of the soil to get them into a fruitful state and keep them so. An inciting weekly address is the salvation of minds of this order. Those who have room for only one idea in their heads at a time need cranial enlargement, which if attempted at once, the receptacle might give way. The only safe course is slow and continuous expansion. Then there are a large class of petrified publicists. Year by year they remain the same, becoming no wiser, no more discreet, no more daring. They have mere Esquimaux minds, all blubber and bearskin. They are what in new colonies are called the squatters of progress. They sit down on the first bare place they find, and never get up again. At the end of years you find them where they were. They say the same things, they think in the old way, they retail the old suspicions, and if a new idea comes in their way they have no appetite for it. They nibble at it like a rabbit. And if they choose ideas for themselves, they, rabbit like, are allured by the greenest.

Then there is a further class who conclude they know everything, and who think neither sermons, nor books, nor newspapers, nor lectures are of any use or need to them. They fancy themselves self-acting and all-knowing. These are adherents who are at once the ornaments and discouragements of a cause, who disseminate apathy and know it not. Only those of strong and exceptional natures are able to work for a length of time unaided by the stimulus of daily recurring and renewed impressions. It is a fortunate law of human nature that no impression remains long of the same force. Were it not so, the first great sorrow would bow us low all our lives. Disappointment would subjugate us, and we should fall into leaden despair. It is the same with our noblest impressions; they, too, grow weaker with time. No will is strong enough to maintain its pristine force. No high purpose, no deep sense of duty can keep us always at the level of a great resolve. Every man has to deplore how he has failed in carrying out his greatest resolutions. Business, necessity, daily duties, claims of others upon him, new events which none can foresee and none evade, all come and dissipate the fiercest resolution.

“ For each day brings its petty dust  
 Our soon choked minds to fill ;  
 And we forget because we must,  
 And not because we will.”

What it fell to me to teach such hearers as appeared in the hall, were secular grounds of tolerance and unity as might render co-operative efforts possible. The substance may be briefly stated.

Man is small and does not require a big theory of life. A plain working plan is enough ; each creature has two main qualities—susceptibility and resistance. The capacities of receiving noble impressions, and of insensibility to the ignoble ones, are our best endowments. When thought or circumstances create within us impulse of choice or action, we call that will. As we know other persons to be constituted as ourselves, we strive by reason or by surrounding them with suitable material conditions to create the will we wish to prevail. The whole question is described by Wordsworth in the lines—

“ The eye it cannot choose but see,  
 We cannot bid the ear be still,  
 Our bodies feel where'er they be,  
 Against or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are powers  
 Which of themselves our minds impress,  
 And we can feed this mind of ours  
 By a wise passiveness.”

Wordsworth saying this was counted spirituality—in us it was assailed as materialism ; and the clergy were angry with us. According to their own account, God had been very bountiful to them in according to them many graces—but we found discernment was very sparingly vouchsafed to them in those days. Attacked without reason, we went out on the war-path. On the banner entrusted to me I put the words—“They who believe they have the Truth ask no favour, save that of being heard : they dare the judgment of mankind : refused co-operation, they accept opposition—for opposition is their opportunity.” It was demanded of us that we gave our opinion on Theism and Futurity. Mine was brief, but as straight as I knew how to make it.

Outside the world of science and morality lies the great debateable ground of the existence of Deity and a future state.

The ruler of the debateable ground is named Probability, and his two ministers are Curiosity and Speculation. Over that mighty plain, which is as wide as the universe and as old as time, no voice of the gods has ever been heard, and no footstep of theirs has been traced. Philosophers have explored the field with telescopes of a longer range than the eyes of a thousand saints, and have beheld nothing save the silent and distant horizon ; and priests have denounced them for not seeing what was invisible. Sectaries have clamoured and the most ignorant have howled—as the most ignorant always do—that there *was* something there, because they wished to see it. All the while the white mystery is still unpenetrated in this life, and we must die to find it out. But a future being undiscovered is no proof that there is no future. Those who reason through their desire will *believe* there is ; those who reason through their understanding may yet *hope* that there is. In the meantime all stand before the portals of the untrodden world in equal unknowingness of what lies beyond. In this world which is under our feet we may be equal in friendliness, duty, and justice. The reverence of that which is right is no mean form of worship. As we read in the family motto of the Maharajahs of Benares, "There is no Religion higher than Truth," and the only truth which can be trusted is that which can be tested here. The believer said to the prophet : "I will set my camel free and trust him to Allah." Mahomet answered : "Tie thy camel first and then commit him to God."

Such were the teachings of my lectureship. If it did not go far, it did not mislead. It was for a prudent piety. I saw the gods had a good deal on their hands if they personally took care of everybody, and it seemed most reverential to give them as little trouble as possible. It was the aim of English Socialism to make good citizens, good neighbours, good parents, and good workmen. Our principles went no further, and as Karpas said to Prince Tuctan, we hoped God would take it in good part, and have mercy on our souls.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *TRouble by the Way.*

(1841.)

It never entered into my mind that I should one day be a prisoner. It came about in this wise. Robert Owen, the princely advocate of a new social state, entitled it a "rational religion." Reason in piety was not then, as has been said, understood—faith being regarded as above logic. The Conservatives of that day assailed the religion of usefulness, which taught that the character of man could be improved by better material conditions than then existed. This was thought to diminish the power of going wrong, whereas it merely tended to make virtue inevitable. The Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Philpotts, took the floor of the House of Lords against us, and caused dismissal from office of many of the new way of thinking. My townsman, William Pare, thus lost his registrarship in Birmingham, though a man of high official character and wide civic repute. The lecture-halls of these rationalists being under episcopal license, the lecturers could be called upon to make public oath that they held Christian tenets, and took the Bible as the guide of their teaching—which they did not, excepting so far as its moral precepts were conducive to the nobler human life they advocated. Two of these lecturers—Robert Buchanan, the father of the poet of that name, and Mr. Lloyd Jones—both colleagues of mine, took this oath. Mr. Jones, the foremost man on the social warpath, being an Irishman, was for meeting the enemy with his own weapons—took the oath at once. Mr. Buchanan, being a Scotchman, and having the veracity of the Covenanter lingering in his bones, took a week to consider

whether he would swear the thing which was not—but swore at last. Mr. G. A. Fleming, editor of the *New Moral World*, justified seeking safety by the oath. This kind of oath-taking rather compromised the new *moral* world. Mr. Charles Southwell and myself, with Mr. Maltus Questell Ryall, the son of an engraver in London, and William Chilton, a printer of Bristol, formed a Defiant Syndicate of Four, and issued the *Oracle of Reason*. Southwell was a speaker of dramatic power, familiar with the stage as well as the platform. Ryall was an accomplished iconoclast, fiery, original, and, what rarely accompanies those qualities, gentlemanly. Chilton was a cogent, solid writer, ready for any risk, and the only absolute atheist I have known. His articles in the *Oracle* on the "Theory of Regular Gradation" preceded by twelve years the articles on Evolution by Herbert Spencer in the *Leader*, when "regular gradation" began to receive the name of evolution. Of course we soon got into trouble. For issuing No. 4 of our militant Journal, Southwell was sentenced at Bristol to twelve months' imprisonment. As we had no travelling funds in those days, I walked from Birmingham to Bristol, ninety miles, to visit him in gaol, and "fell among thieves" on my way. I delivered a lecture in the Cheltenham Mechanics' Institution upon Self-Supporting Home Colonies, when a local preacher arose and said "I had spoken of our duty towards man, but had said nothing of our duty towards God," and asked for information thereon. It was plainly open to me to reply that theology was not my subject. At no time did I ever undertake to speak on one subject and introduce another. I had a theological mind and I had a secular mind, but I never had a mixed mind, and always kept distinct, things which are separate. My duty was to refuse to answer an irrelevant question, and to point out that he who asked a lecturer to do it invited him to commit a breach of faith towards his audience, who, assembled to hear one subject, would have another imposed upon them which they would never have come to hear had they foreknown it. In these days this representation would be deemed fair, but in those he who made it was at once accused, amid applause, of "holding opinions which he dared not avow." There were, however, local circumstances which would cause an otherwise reasonable refusal to answer the preacher, to be regarded as an evasion.

At that time there was a young schoolmaster and poet in Cheltenham, named Sperry, who had espoused the social opinions I represented, I, having previously resided in the town as a lecturer upon them. Sperry had expressed social sentiments in a poem he had published. He was told that unless he retracted them he would lose his teachership. He did retract them, which created an impression of social cowardice in the party of social advocates, as the oath-taking by Mr. Lloyd Jones in Bristol was known in Cheltenham. When Sperry had retracted, he was dismissed all the same. He was humiliated, and then ruined. Had I refused to answer the question put to me, I should have increased the belief in our want of courage and candour. So at once I gave a defiant answer to the preacher—but not one that shocked any one, for it produced merriment. In our proposed industrial colonies, I observed, all were free to erect as many churches as they pleased, but, from my point of view, it was bad political economy to expend money that way, seeing the distressed condition in which the people then were. My answer was to this effect, but with terms of audacity which I deemed the occasion required. (The story in detail is told in the History of the Trial at Gloucester.) This unforeseen incident brought consequences which affected all my future life.

All was owing to the habit, from which I have never departed, of permitting discussion after a lecture. It has always seemed to me a criminal thing to deliver any address intended to influence belief and conduct, without giving the hearer opportunity of challenging there and then the validity of the argument advanced in the presence of those who heard it, while the impression was vivid in their minds. Every hearer, according to his belief, has to answer to his conscience or to God for the opinions he holds. Each man has to answer for himself. And since no speaker takes the hearer's responsibility, *he* is deficient in the sense of self-protection who does not think for himself where he has to answer for himself. Not less is the speaker the enemy of the hearer who under any pretext imposes upon him opinions without affording him the means of self-defence by question and debate. Had I prohibited discussion, I should have saved myself a world of trouble. But I should have been dishonest to the hearer, and have known myself to be so. Free discussion has its penalties as well as its advantages. Its advantages are

that new truth rests on a solid foundation when those who accept it know both sides of a new question. The penalties are liability to have free speech abused—meetings thrown into confusion by ignorant, unscrupulous, irrelevant, and malevolent adversaries, and possible imprisonment of the lecturer who answers a question with imprudent candour. But we, who maintained the salutary principle of free debate, were willing to accept this penalty, if it came.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *ARREST IN CHELTENHAM.*

(1841.)

WITHOUT intellectual distinction Cheltenham had extraordinary theological sensitiveness. It was the common talk of the town, when the incident recorded in the last chapter occurred, that a Mormon preacher was committed to gaol on a charge of blasphemy, for having said in one of his sermons that "Euclid was as true as the Bible." The Grand Jury at Gloucester were suspected of latitudinarianism when they threw out the bill. Had the trial taken place, he had surely been convicted.

Mr. Capper, one of the magistrates, said that what I did was for the purpose of notoriety. Had that been my intent, Cheltenham was the last place in which I should have sought it. As I have elsewhere said,<sup>1</sup> the day is chilled in my memory when I first set foot in the town. Snow had been frozen on the ground a fortnight. I was then a stationed missionary in Worcester sent down to evangelize Cheltenham in social ideas. With a household income of 16s. a week, there was little to feed the passion for "notoriety" upon. I feel now the fierce blast which came in at the train window from "the fields of Tewkesbury," on our way. The cold wrapped us round like a cloak of ice.

The shop lights threw their red glare over the snow-bedded ground as we entered the town of Cheltenham, and nothing but the drift and ourselves moved through the deserted streets. When at last we found a fire, we had to wait to thaw before we could begin to speak. When tea was over, we were escorted to

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Last Trial for Atheism."

the house where we were to stay for the night. I was told it was "a friend's house." Cheltenham is a fashionable town, a watering, visiting place, where everything is genteel and thin. As the parlours of some prudent housewives are kept for show, and not to sit in, so in Cheltenham numerous houses are kept "to be let," and not to live in.

The people who belong to the apartments are like the supernumeraries on a stage—they are employed in walking over them. Their clothes are decent, but they cannot properly be said to wear them ; they carry them about on their backs to show that they have such things. In the same manner eating and drinking is rather pantomime than reality. Such a house was the "friend's house" to which we were conducted. We were asked to sit by the kitchen fire on "the bench in the corner," and there we sat from eight till one o'clock, without being asked to take anything to eat. My wife, with her child at the breast, fared badly that night. Waiting upon a party elsewhere kept my "friends" up till two o'clock—up to which time we saw no prospect of bed or supper. Soon after we entered the house, my wife, with a woman's prescience, said, "George, you had better go and buy some food." "Buy food," I replied, in simplicity, "the people at this fine house will be outraged to see me bring in food." I repented me of my credulity that night. When at last I clearly comprehended that we were to have nothing to eat, I proceeded to take affairs into my own hands, and being too well assured of the insensibility of my host, I did it in a way that I conceived suited to his capacity, and began as follows :—

"We have talked for some time about social progress, and if you have no objection we will make some. And if eating," I added, "be not an irregular thing in your house, we will take some supper."

"I am very sorry to say," he answered, "we have nothing to offer you."

"Charge me for bed and board while we are with you," I rejoined, "but let us have *both*. You have bread, I suppose?"

"We have some *rice* bread."

"Perhaps you will toast it."

"Will you have it *toasted*?"

"I will. Could you not make coffee?"

“We have no coffee.”

“Tea?”

“We have no tea.”

“Any water?”

“No *hot* water.”

“Any butter?”

“Yes, we have *salt* butter.”

“Then put some on the rice bread,” I added, for he did not even propose to do that. I had to dispute every inch of hospitality with him. My “friend,” Mr. V., was an instance of that misplacement of which Plato speaks in his “Republic.” What a capital Conservative he would have made! No innovation with him—not even into his own loaf!—I was obliged to take the initiative into the “salt” butter.

After seeing the bread toasted, and buttering it myself, to make sure that it was buttered, I put on my hat and went into the streets in search of material out of which to manufacture a cordial, for eight hours had elapsed since Mrs. Holyoake had had any sustenance, and my good host’s choice reserve of cold water did not seem suitable.

When I reached the dark streets, to which I was so absolute a stranger, not knowing the neighbourhood, I found the ground slippery, made so by rain frozen on snow: I had not gone (or rather slipped) far before I was lost. Like the sense in a Rousseauian love-letter, I neither knew whence I came nor whether I was going, and when I had succeeded in my errand it was at the last place at which I should wish to be found.

During my absence, that voluptuous caterer, “mine host,” whom I had left behind—whose counterpart Maginn must have had before him when he drew the portrait of “Quarantotti”—had proceeded so far as to boil some water. The evening ended without inconsistency, and the bed corresponded with the supper.

The next day I took lodgings, where, expecting nothing, I was no longer disappointed. But on this occasion, profiting by the experience of the preceding night, I went provided with a small stock of loaves and chocolate. My stay in Cheltenham was more agreeable than was to be expected after such an introduction; but I remember that I had to pay my expenses back again, and though they only amounted to 12s., I felt the

want of them afterwards. Yet Cheltenham was not without generous partizans, but, as is common in the incipiency of opinion, they were at that time among that class who had fewest means. The experience here recounted was a sample of that frequently recurring, not exactly of the kind to nurture the love of notoriety. The day after the adventure with the preacher I walked to Bristol, where I received a *Cheltenham Chronicle*, the organ of the Rev. Francis Close, afterwards Dean of Carlisle, in which I read that a warrant was out for my apprehension. Thus forewarned by my friends, a prudent person would have kept clear of Cheltenham ; but I was not a prudent person. I was of Cobden's opinion—that there are times when it is rashness to do nothing. The motive which influenced me in answering the preacher as I did, disinclined me from running away.

It was a hot and blazing day in June when I walked back (thirty miles) to Cheltenham. The authorities, persuaded that persons of my way of thinking would keep clear of peril, never thought of my reappearing. They kept no look-out for me, and before the sun went down on June 1st, I was at Mr. Adams' house not far from the police station. The Chartist had announced a meeting in the Mechanics' Institution for the night : and I being a friend of theirs, they gave up their room to me. The Chartist were always good at conflict, and readily assisted me, as I had done their leaders in like circumstances.<sup>1</sup> It was soon noised abroad that I was actually speaking at a public meeting in the town. After I had spoken an hour in vindication of free speech in answer to public questions, the superintendent of police entered, armed with all the available force at hand. They formed a handsome addition to the audience, and as they ranged themselves against the walls on either side the door, their shining hats formed a picturesque background to the meeting. This determined me to speak an hour longer--not having foreseen such an opportunity of extending Liberal views in official quarters. At the conclusion I placed myself at the disposal of the chief of the police. Asking to see the warrant for my apprehension, I was told the magistrates did not

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Julian Harney, writing in the *Northern Star*, under date of 11, Hartshead, Sheffield, June 13, 1842, said : "The Chartists of Sheffield know how ever ready Mr. Holyoake was to serve them while in their town."

stand on those ceremonies in Cheltenham. It appeared that they did not know that a warrant was necessary. That night the plank bed in the cell was unpleasant, and more so the tipsy and turbulent inmates there. The next morning came the interview with the acting magistrate, who, to my surprise, was the Rev. Dr. Newell. The Rev. S. Jones was another magistrate. A brewer is not eligible to adjudicate on affairs of the hostelry, but here was a clergyman exercising penal power in the affairs of the pulpit. Gentlemanly scruples were in those days no part of Cheltenham divinity.

The prosecutor was a Mr. Bubb, a particularly gross, furious, squab-built, vulgar person. On my stating to the magistrates that I had been brought there without any proper warrant, Mr. Capper, one of them, stated that any person at the meeting would have been justified in taking me up without any warrant from a magistrate. This would produce plentiful disturbance of the peace of "our Lady the Queen," if every person was entitled, on his own motion, to apprehend every other person who might express opinions distasteful to him. For years after "Cheltenham law" was a byword in legal circles in London.

One of the witnesses against me was a dog-fancier and prize-fighter, pursuits which did not imply theological discrimination or sensitiveness. The other witness was a printer in the *Chronicle* office. Neither had any positive idea of what had been said at the meeting, and they could only swear "to the best of their belief." When two friends tendered bail for me, one of them was refused, because he said that, "to the best of his belief," he was worth the £50 required. I reminded the Bench that the testimony against me had been accepted on the "best of the witnesses' belief." The reverend magistrate resented this as quibbling, and when another friend offered bail, I desired him not to do so, and let the Bench take its own course. Shortly after handcuffs were put on me, which, being too small, pinched my wrists, and, with two policemen, I was taken through the town to walk to Gloucester Gaol, nine miles. This was a needless outrage, as a prisoner who had surrendered himself was not likely to attempt to escape—nor to succeed, if he did, with two policemen with him. Our road lay by the railway station, which was some distance from the town, where friends who had

accompanied me ascertained that by paying the policemen's fares and my own, we might ride—which was done.

The station of Gloucester was also some distance from the city, and as the handcuffs were never removed I had to walk through the city as I had walked through Cheltenham.

It was a doctrine of mine that anger was but the exhibition of ignorance taken by surprise: and that hatred was opposed to economy of time, as it enabled persons whom you knew and detested, to occupy your thoughts with schemes of retaliation. There is a period in law when debts are no longer recoverable, and I have suggested to co-operative societies that associative animosities should be closed with the accounts, and not carried forward to the next quarter. Certainly the best new year's resolve is to cancel the hatreds which the past twelve months may have engendered—to treat them as though they had never been, and begin each new year free from the unprofitable burden of resentment or malevolence to any man. Though this rule has brought me a sense of peace like an annual endowment, I find after fifty years some anti-clerical indignation creep into my mind when the intentional indignities of my march to Gloucester Gaol recur to me.

On Mr. Southwell's imprisonment for editing the *Oracle of Reason*, I had taken his place. The knowledge of this did not commend me favourably to the authorities.

My host in Cheltenham was Mr. George Adams. Indignant at what befell me, he put the *Oracle* in his window and sold it, which led to his being apprehended. His wife, a handsome, intelligent, and spirited woman, indignant at that, continued the sale of the *Oracle*, and she was apprehended with her youngest child in her arms. Four other children were left alone in the house—father and mother both being locked up. When the neighbours found the poor children the neighbours were indignant. The next day Mrs. Adams was liberated on bail, but both she and her husband were committed for trial.

The reverend adversaries into whose hands I had fallen, committed me for felony. Free speech, however objectionable it might be, was not felony. If it was not ignorance in them to treat it so, it was malice. They also said in the warrant that I had spoken "wickedly." Yet there is no wickedness where there is no evil intent.

They said I had "uttered" the words complained of "before children," which was untrue, as there was no child in the place. Had children been present, they could not have understood what was said. But neither accuracy nor veracity were magisterial attainments in 1842.

At that time I was in the custody of the clergy, and this language of theirs was so unexpected and untrue, that it created in my mind a dislike and distrust of them I had never felt before. I have been assured that they merely used certain terms of the law. But lying according to law is a worse offence than that of Ananias, since it adds the authority of law to falsehood. Lying before a God by those who believe Him to exist is surely worse than speaking the truth by those who deem His existence to be unknown. I had been accustomed to regard with reverence the ministers of God as persons who would neither speak nor write what was untrue, however erroneous the doctrines they might hold. I had ample time to think of all this as I sat on the edge of my cell bed during the first night in Gloucester Gaol. The lice I observed creeping about the blankets prevented me lying down.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *THREE WEEKS IN PRISON FOR NOT TAKING THE OATH.*

(1841-2.)

MARTYRDOM was never to my taste. No person could be more disinclined than myself to acquire that unpleasant distinction. It has been said, "Blessed are ye when men persecute you." I already knew the contrary. Persecution is entirely disagreeable, whether it be incurred for righteousness' sake or any other sake. It was said I sought it. This is always said when public trouble overtakes you. It is the popular excuse of those who bring it upon you. Yet when it comes in consequence of doing what you think to be your duty, it is to be accepted. But he who seeks it is a fool who forfeits all claim to commiseration when he gets what he wanted. Some years later (1847) when I took out a policy in the Equity Law Life Office I asked for the condition that it should not be invalidated if death came to me in prison. The company, like others, held that a policy became void by suicide—the assumption of directors being that as soon as a man insured his life he would cut his throat. I did not expect to die in a prison. I did not want to, I did not mean to, but I did not intend to incur penalties which would affect my family if imprisonment happened to me.

When imprisonment did come to me, I neither feared it nor whined about it. The only favour I asked was not to be put among criminals. The choice offered me was a vacant side of the gaol where the condemned cells lay, with a large yard to walk in. There I spent three weeks, the only occupant of that uncheerful solitude. There was time to prepare my defence,

but the material was lacking. The chaplain vetoed the books which he did not approve. Yet how was a prisoner to defend himself against a charge of the Church, if the chaplain selected the works of reference? On Sir James Graham expressing to the magistrates his disapproval, my books were handed to me. But this was not until the day before my liberation, and only seven days before the assizes opened. They had kept them from me three valuable weeks.

The reason of my detention in prison was my refusal to take an oath. I was required to provide two sureties of £50 each and enter into and swear to my own recognizances in £100. This I declined to do, the oath implying a belief I did not hold. The governor—Captain Mason—who was always gentlemanly, thought this unfair to myself because, the assizes being near, I should, when liberated, have very little time in which to prepare my defence. He said to me, "What does it matter, Holyoake, how many gods you swear by, since you do not appear to believe in any?" I said, "It certainly did not matter to the gods, but it mattered very much to me to pretend to a belief I do not hold. Not assenting to Christianity, how could I take the Christian oath?" At last I was liberated without making an oath, from fear of the scandal of putting a prisoner on his trial who had been denied the means of defence.

This was owing to outside opinion. The *Weekly Despatch*, of great influence in that day, extended to me its protection. "Publicola" (Captain Williams) wrote in condemnation of the conduct of the magistrates. "Publicola's" letters were read all over the country, and each week as they appeared in Gloucester, they occasioned disquietude in the magisterial breast. More than all, Sir James Graham, then Home Secretary, was my friend, as no Home Secretary since has befriended any similar prisoner. He said in his place in Parliament that the magistrates had behaved "with unnecessary harshness" towards me. There was serious censure upon them, and was felt to be so in the county.

Mr. Craven Berkeley, M.P., a friend of the Church, was put up in the House of Commons, in order to obtain the publication of his correspondence with the magistrates that their defence of themselves might be before the public. Sir James Graham adhered to the statements he had made in answer to

Mr. Roebuck's inquiry, namely, that "serious irregularities" had been committed, and said he had ordered an inquiry into them. Sir James was of opinion that they had no defence which could serve them.

Mr. J. A. Roebuck, always the friend of intellectual liberty, presented for me a memorial to Parliament which represented that, as my commitment was to the Quarter Sessions, my judges would be the same magistrates who had already treated me vindictively. Sir James Graham's sense of justice concurred in this view, and when Mr. Roebuck spoke to him upon it he said "justice should be done," and he kept his word. A Bill was immediately brought in and passed, appointing all trials relating to speculative opinion to take place at assizes only, where an independent judge presided. Thus the magistrates were put out of court. I was the first person tried under this Act.

On my liberation I went to London, which I had never seen, walking most of the way. It seemed to me an enchanted city as I entered it, and seems so still. My first night was spent in a summer-house, in a garden in Lambeth, with my colleague on the *Oracle*, M. Q. Ryall, arranging the order of my defence. Morning had long broken before we lay down on the benches to sleep. In those days there was an hostelry near the Mansion House, known as the "City House of Commons," where successive city politicians from the years of the preceding century had discussed public affairs. I was invited to give a narrative of the proceedings at Cheltenham. Afterwards the company made a subscription towards the expenses of the trial. Another night I spoke in the Rotunda, Blackfriars Road. "Publicola" was present, and gave an account in the *Despatch* of what I said, which, better than anything I might say now, will satisfy the reader as to the nature of the principles for which we contended, which, admitted now, then excited implacable hostility and personal defamation.

Captain Williams said:—"Mr. Holyoake delivered a lecture on the Right of Free Discussion to a crowded audience in the Rotunda. He commented on his treatment in Cheltenham, of which mention was made in this journal [the *Despatch*] at the time. The magistrates on that occasion declared that they did not care of what religion he might be so long as he did not

propagate his doctrines. Mr. Holyoake then expatiated very eloquently upon this selfish principle. 'Thus,' he said, 'a man may see the errors of certain systems, and yet not point out emendations.' Our ideas, argued the lecturer, are engendered by the objects around us, and if we are prosecuted by law for the expression of these ideas the external objects which created our ideas ought to be prosecuted. For any class of men to take upon themselves to say to the people, 'If you think in a manner which militates against our ideas, you must not express your sentiments,' is degrading. Without liberty of speech, interchange of ideas, which freedom of discussion can alone encourage, is impossible; no new systems of utility can be adduced; and had not opinions been more or less freely circulated at different times, humanity would be without progressive civilization. Our wealth, our knowledge, our power, are to be attributed to the Press and to the diffusion of opinions. The Press has converted the world into one large conversational party, whose views, wishes, and opinions are thereby communicated to each other. Speculative opinions beget important truths, and useful systems are founded most frequently upon ideas that were at first but wild theories. If the law describes a magic circle around the radii of men's ideas, it naturally forbids the entertainment of progressive measures, and enforces a stationary and sedentary position, to which the activity of the human mind and the nature of human interests are both averse. New generations have new interests, which are only to be defined by legislative enactment, after due and unchecked discussion. All the learning which our greatest men have ever possessed would little avail posterity, unless their assertions might be duly canvassed. It is a very singular fact that we may discuss astronomy, chemistry, botany, geology, and other sciences, but our sentiments must be curbed by the law when once we touch upon politics or religion. Such was the subject of Mr. Holyoake's lecture, in the course of which he uttered many striking truths of an original character, which elicited considerable applause.' (*Weekly Despatch*, July, 1841.)

It was within those few days of my visit to London that I made the acquaintance of Mr. W. H. Ashurst, whose friendship then and afterwards was of the greatest advantage to me. He advised me as to my defence, and John Humphrey Parry, after-

wards Serjeant Parry, then a young barrister, prepared the legal argument which I used at my trial.

One night I went down to the House of Commons. It was the old house, afterwards destroyed by fire. Before long I heard my own name pronounced to my surprise. A young prisoner never feels safe for some time afterwards, and I thought I was going to be apprehended again. It was merely my friend Mr. Roebuck, who was presenting a memorial to the House concerning the legal irregularities of the Cheltenham Bench.

It was a bright summer afternoon when I set out alone from the house of my eldest sister, in which my family resided, in Aston, Birmingham, to proceed to Gloucester Assizes. It was not in my power to leave any provision for those I left behind, owing to the unforeseen and unsought apprehension which had befallen me. My little daughter, Madeline, ran from her mother's knee to the door, when she found I had gone, and called after me down the street. Her sweet, clear voice arrested me. I looked back, and saw her dark, black eyes gleaming. I never met her glance again, nor heard her voice any more.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### *THE TRIAL.*

(1842.)

THE assizes opened on August 2, 1842. Mr. Knight Hunt, the author of "The Fourth Estate," who succeeded Dickens as editor of the *Daily News*, reported the trial for me. Hearing that I intended to defend myself, the magistrates told me "the Court would not hear me." The judge, being told of my intention, decided to take my case last, which caused the assizes to extend into another week. On Saturday my case might have come on ; but no one could conjecture how long I should speak. The fear of the Court having to sit until Sunday morning caused the judge to defer the trial till Monday. This made trouble among the javelin men attending upon the judge, who had to be kept in the city. The jurymen who had left their farms, their barrels, their poultry, flour mills, shop tills, and orange baskets, suffered in mind, body, and estate ; and not less the authorities who found with consternation £200 added to the county expenses through my wilfulness. The Shire Hall was crowded as early as ten o'clock on Monday morning ; some of the nobility of the county and wives of clergymen were present, and a fair assortment of surplice wearers.

No one was bound over to prosecute Mrs. Adams. It was not intended that she should be tried, but she was bound out of mere vindictiveness to appear at the assizes, and was kept wandering about the court for ten days, which amounted to a considerable fine, considering the limited means of her household and anxiety for her five children left to chance care. Had

she been a lady, with means of defence, they would not have attempted it. I saw then that the people are never so malignant towards the rich as the rich are towards the poor ; as the powerful are towards those of less estate.

Being unable to bring over their bail, she and her husband were alarmed at being told that their bail would be escheated. I told Adams to go into court and state to the judge that he was unable to bring his bail, but he and Mrs. Adams were there ready to surrender themselves. The judge kindly told them that that was sufficient. Mr. Adams's case was first taken. As the prosecution of Adams was owing to his generous resentment of my arrest, I was very solicitous that he should not incur any consequences I could prevent. It was my duty to defend the right of free speech, but he was under no responsibility of that kind, and I therefore requested my friends to provide counsel for him. We chose Mr. Thompson, because he was the son of General Perronet Thompson, as we thought him less likely to make a compromising defence. In those days, and for many years after, there was no barrister, except Mr. Serjeant Thomas, of London, who would defend a heretic without apologizing for his opinions. This Mr. Thompson did at the conclusion of his defence, and expressed " contrition " on the part of the defendant. I said to Adams, in the hearing of the Court, " Don't permit him to do that unless you are really contrite." Adams at once told the judge that he did not concur with what the counsel said, as he did not feel " contrition " for defending, in his humble way, the right of free speech. This did not improve his sentence, but made it more honourable to him. He was awarded one month's imprisonment.

Mr. Adams had witnesses to his character who described him as of entirely good repute, and, indeed, " a pattern of morality in all the relations of life." The judge told him that " in a charge of robbery that might avail him, but unless he had testimony that he was a Christian it could not avail him in a charge of that kind."

Entering the dock on my name being called, I asked Ogden, the chief gaoler, a tall, stout, surly, imperious, pock-marked person, who had had charge of me in prison, to hand me a box which lay near. Thinking it his duty to show the disrespect he presumed the Court to entertain, he told me to take my place

at the bar. Again my injunction was, "Hand me my box." Looking indignantly at the corded chest outside the dock, he said, "You can't have that box here. Go to the bar and plead." "Nonsense, give it me," was my reply. Beginning to think it was he who was detaining the Court, he reluctantly did as I told him, when I applied to the judge for the use of a table. The judge said, "There is one," pointing to a ledge in the dock which, his lordship thought, would serve my purpose. Although not convenient, I proceeded to arrange my books and papers there, which occupied twenty minutes. By which time it was remarked the dock resembled a small bookseller's shop. The judge looked on with great patience, and when ready I went forward and pleaded. Mr. Alexander was the prosecuting counsel. He was less coarse, but as malignant as Mr. Bubb. He told the jury, "I had not put my diabolical intent in the announcement of the lecture, but had concealed it, with a view to attract an audience," which was contrary both to fact and evidence. The Cheltenham Bench, to do them justice, never said this. It was pure invention on the part of Mr. Alexander to recommend me to the favourable consideration of the jury.

The only offence chargeable against me was that of incidentally, without premeditation or intention, and under the provocation of an insolent question, for which no occasion had been given—uttering certain words—yet the Court permitted an indictment to be read which described me as a "labourer," though I was well known as a public lecturer, who had resided in Cheltenham in that capacity. It charged me with devising, intending, and maliciously publishing with a "loud voice" (which I never possessed) the answer to the question of a preacher, intending "with force and arms to bring Almighty God into disbelief." Seven farmers, one grocer, one poultreer, one miller, one nondescript shopkeeper, and one maltster were then empanelled to ascertain whether I had, or had not, assaulted Omnipotence with "force of arms." The utmost offence in my words were infinitesimal compared with the profanity of this amazing indictment. It said I wickedly "composed the words I had spoken, although they occurred in debate without chance or possibility of premeditation. It charged me with having spoken "against the peace of our Lady the Queen," whereas I had neither spoken against the peace nor broken the

peace, and had neither thought of the Queen nor meant her disrespect.

Historians think they illustrate their pages very conclusively when they quote legal documents describing the profession and purposes of some person recorded therein. Why should law courts, which profess to be the guardians of public morality, lie more than rumour, in their documents?

The *Oracle of Reason*, which I undertook to edit during Mr. Southwell's imprisonment, made the defiant declaration, written by Ryall :—"We war not with the Church but the Altar—not with the forms of Christianity but with Christianity itself—not with the attributes but with the Existence of Deity." After what had taken place I was determined to maintain the right of inquiry into these things. My acquaintance with heresy was too short and my knowledge too limited to enable me to do more intelligently. The conception of Deity entertained by the clerical adversaries we encountered seemed to me neither true nor desirable, and I believed that God Himself must dislike persons of that way of thinking about Him.

My defence if it lacked prudence did not lack explicitness. I spoke nine hours and fifteen minutes. In the latter part my voice much improved in strength and tone. When the Court adjourned at mid-day, some ladies, observing that I was taking nothing, offered me some tartlets they had brought for their own refreshment : one I was told was the wife of a clergyman. Not needing to eat, I declined the kindly offer.

When I had spoken six hours, the governor of the gaol came to me to ask how long I should continue, as the judge was interested in knowing. I answered, "If the Court was likely to hear me, I should end in three hours." In all reason the Court "had heard me sufficiently," but the magistrates, who had told me repeatedly that "the Court would not hear me, and I should not be allowed to make my own defence," did me harm in making me thus persistent. When I had spoken some three hours longer, it occurred to me that the Court "had heard" me, and I concluded.

Mr. Justice Erskine said, "If I could convince the jury that my only meaning was that the incomes of the clergy ought to be reduced, and that I did not intend to insult God, I should tell the jury that you ought not to be convicted." This was

the exact purport of what I said. To "insult God" was never in my mind; nor in anybody's mind. It is ever some degrading conception of Deity which is denied. I never knew a case of an atheistic denial in which there was not more reverence in the mind of the heretic than the prosecutor. Had I confined myself to the two points named by the judge, there was a chance my sentence might have been mitigated. But my mind was set upon two other things—one was that we would seek neither favour nor mercy by solicitation or concession; the other was to vindicate the right to say what I did, whatever it might be taken to mean.

Mr. Justice Erskine suggested to the jury that there was no evidence that I had connived at some person putting the question to me to give me an opportunity of uttering these sentiments. This was very fairly said—had the jury been intelligent—but in effect it was a most injurious suggestion. The counsel had put the idea of connivance into their heads, and the stolid and prejudiced jury believed the judge to confirm it. I expected twelve months' imprisonment, as my defence contained no apology, but was absolute and defiant for free speech. The judge admitted that, with my views, I could not honestly answer my questioner otherwise than I did, and, being a young man, he gave me six months' imprisonment to encourage me in candour.

That night Captain Mason remarked that he thought the sentence was not to be much complained of, seeing how many hours I had occupied the Court. In this I quite concurred with him, and never did complain of it. Indeed, I more deserved the imprisonment for the defence than the offence. Never having been a prisoner before, and unacquainted with the ways of magistrates, their ignorant menace had harmed me—made me resentful, and exposed me to the charge of being wanting in good sense, which was more serious in my mind than to be thought wanting in orthodoxy.

Mr. Justice Erskine was the grandson of the famous Lord Chancellor of that name, who defended the publication of one of Thomas Paine's books. The Erskines were descendants of one of the oldest Scottish families. Mr. Justice Erskine bore small trace of his Scottish descent, and was a placid, mild-mannered English gentleman when I made his acquaintance.

He displayed patience and good temper during the unconscionable time I detained him upon the Bench. Some time after he disappeared from the Bench. How I never inquired—always retaining respect for his memory for his fairness to me.

It was eleven o'clock at night when I walked from court to gaol. Captain Mason considerately asked me if I objected to go with two stray criminals he had in charge. I said I would prefer to walk with Adams only. It was so arranged, and together we set out. Before being locked in my cell I asked if I could have a little of something to eat. I had been thirteen hours in court without food, and a feeling of extreme hollowness came over me. All that could be got for me at that hour was a cup of warm water, and the warder found an old apple in his pocket, which he kindly gave me, and with these I made the first repast of my new imprisonment.

But for a misadventure of refreshments, I might have fared better that day. At that time, a Mrs. Chichester resided in Gloucestershire, who took interest in social improvement, and had enough experience to know that the theological portraits of heretics were not executed by pre-Raphaelite artists skilled in adherence to the truth of nature. She knew that in matters of controversy people who read only one side of a question and boast of the duty of not knowing the other, did not come within the pale of competency or trust ; she therefore sent down to Gloucester small presents of wine and birds, as she understood I might have to wait about court seven or ten days before the trial came on. The medium for conveying those kindly gifts was Mr. Fry, whom she knew as professing the lofty moral mysticism of John Pierrepont Greaves, who had disciples in Cheltenham. Mr. Fry, however, was not mystical—he was very practical, for, being a teetotaler, he drank all the wine himself, and, being a vegetarian, he ate the birds. Mr. Fry was editor of the *Communist Apostle*, one of whose mottoes was that "It is the beauty within that reflects beauteous light on outward objects." It was presumably on this principle that my wine and pheasants became irresistible to him.

On the morning of my trial he brought me a small bottle of raspberry vinegar, which he said Mrs. Chichester had sent, as it might be of use to me in speaking. It was two years after before I learned what else she had sent. She must have

wondered at my want of civility in never sending a word in acknowledgment.

One day, attending the courts during the ten days I was awaiting my own trial, I saw a man sentenced to transportation for life to Norfolk Island. His offence had arisen in ignorant and depraving circumstances, yet, when he heard the ferocious sentence, in genuine and awkward humbleness he made a rustic bow to the Bench, saying, "Thank you, my lord." Ignorance had never appeared to me before so frightful, slavish, and blind. Unable to distinguish a deadly sentence passed upon him from a service done to him, he had been taught to bow to his pastors and masters, and he bowed alike when cursed as when blessed.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### *SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT FOR ANSWERING A QUESTION IN DEBATE.*

(1842.)

"Have you bethought you of the tedious days  
And dreary nights of your imprisonment?  
The long endurance, whose monotony  
No tidings come to cheer! *This* were the trial!  
It is the detail of blank intervals—  
Of patient sufferance, where no action is,  
That proves our nature. Have you this thought o'er?"

J. W. MARSTON.

No. It did not appear to me to matter. In a general way I had an impression that imprisonment was unpleasant. But that seemed no reason for not doing what was right. The maxim that conscience was higher than consequence always appeared true to me. Imprisonment was worse in my time than in the days of Leigh Hunt and Carlile. Hunt had books, flowers, and company. Pleasant visitors had access to Carlile, who spent hours in his society. Except through the bars of a gate, I saw no friend. I was imprisoned in a city far from those to whom I was best known, and few visits were possible. The first and chief of the visitors was Richard Carlile, who came to tell me of his approval of my defence. This, from the most intrepid defender of free speech of this century, tended to render me indifferent to the discomfort of my new residence.

The visiting justice who most interested me was Mr. Bransby Cooper, brother of Sir Astley, the famous surgeon. He formerly represented Gloucester in Parliament. He was a man of great stature, great tenderness, great humanity, and, like Lord Byron, a man of tumultuous passion, with a voice like the Plymouth Sound. Old women would waylay him on his road to the gaol.

He would brandish his stick at them, and drive them away with menaces and threats which could be heard across the city ; but though they fled, they returned, for they knew that in the end he would give them all the money he had in his pocket. He would tell me in his stentorian way, before the other prisoners, that I was "a fool for being an atheist," and end by saying, "I could not be one—I did not look like one, nor speak like one." His son was chaplain of the gaol. The old gentleman was very anxious for my conversion, and, had he brought it about, he would no doubt have generously given the credit to his boy. It was therefore a kind of family speculation that I should be brought to a "state of grace." Yet when my little daughter died, and her mother wished to bring the surviving one to me, Mr. Bransby Cooper kindly ordered that we should have the use of the magistrates' room for an interview, without the presence of an officer. This unforeseen consideration—so delicate and trustful—inspired me with real respect for him, which has never departed from my mind. I would have been converted if I could to gratify him. One day the governor told me that Mr. Bransby Cooper had said before a meeting of magistrates, at which he had laid some representation of mine, that "he did not believe I could tell a lie," which was very generous in him, considering the prejudice he entertained towards my opinions. This arose from a prisoner (one Upton) being found smoking. He said he had brought the tobacco (I had given him) in with him after the trial—probably to save me from being made answerable. It was some I had upon me in court. This man, who was in the common room, was subject to fits, which he said tobacco mitigated. So I gave him some. It was a reflection upon the vigilance of the officer who received him if tobacco had escaped his notice. To prevent Ogden, the officer, being wrongfully accused, I sent a note to the governor, saying it was I who had given the tobacco to Upton. I owned it was a censurable violation of the prison rules, and stated that I should not demur to the consequences. None ensued. Probably the authorities were gratified that their officer was vindicated from the suspicion of laxity of vigilance. The tobacco was given me at the time of my trial, and I was not searched after sentence.

The Rev. Robert Cooper, the chaplain of the gaol, had the

kindly nature, but none of the force of character, of his father. He was merely a regulation clergyman, who believed he had spiritual duties to discharge ; but his piety was like cold water —it gave you the discomfort of dampness, and when dry again you were as you were before. Still I retain respect for him. He had none of that spite of piety I had hitherto experienced, and he was only disagreeable as a matter of official duty. A prison is a place of organized brutality, and is so intended. For a chaplain to speak of "divine love" *there* is not to understand his business. A single humane act does more to spiritualize a man than a thousand exhortations without it.

The Hon. Andrew Sayer was one of the visiting justices. He was no soldier of the Cross. He brought me "Paley's Natural Theology," and Leslie's "Short and Easy Method with the Deists," which he asked me to read. This I promised to do ; and that he might satisfy himself that the promise was fulfilled, I said he might examine me in the works afterwards—but he never did. I wrote pamphlets upon their arguments ("Paley Refuted in his own Words," and "A Short and Easy Method with the Saints") to show that they had received careful attention.

Another of the visiting justices was the Rev. S. Jones, an aged Wesleyan minister, who appeared deferential to his brother justices, placid in speech, and only ill-mannered professionally. He would occasionally deliver a little lecture to me, before the other prisoners, on the belief I ought to entertain. One day he quoted to me the ignorant remark of David, that "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." This is what the fool never does say, the subject being beyond his capacity. Certainly I had never said it in my heart or otherwise. It had appeared to me to require infinite knowledge of the universe to affirm or deny that stupendous proposition. "There," exclaimed Mr. Jones, "you see David says you are a fool." Whereupon I answered "that I no more admired rudeness in the mouth of David than I did in the mouth of a magistrate." Every one present heard me say it, and the Reverend Samuel looked amazed, was unable to reply, and never more referred to the subject.

Before long the magistrates became a more serious trouble to me—probably their version was that I became a trouble to them.

They called upon me to wear the prison dress. My answer was that "I did not wish to do it." It was the dress of crime, and as I was no criminal it would be admitting it to wear the dress of crime by my own choice. In gaol I knew official force must be supreme; therefore, I never said "I would not" do a thing, only that "I did not wish to do it." Of course they said they should compel me. In that case my reply was "it would be necessary to dress me every morning, as I might not like to put the dress on myself." As it was never done, I fancy they thought the trouble of it might be too much for them, or it might be that they were in doubt whether Sir James Graham would sanction it.

Another trouble soon arose. When the prayer bell rang the first morning, all the prisoners filed out to chapel, but I remained. Seeing my allotted place vacant, the chaplain sent the gaoler for me. I said "it was incredible that the chaplain should send for me. He knew my imprisonment was owing to my not properly believing in his ministrations, and that my voluntary attendance at his chapel would be hypocrisy in me." The gaoler said "he must carry out his instructions and take me there." My reply was, "In that case you had better get assistance and carry me, as I do not think I should like to go. Whether the chaplain's congregation will be edified by seeing a dissentient worshipper carried into chapel every morning it will be for him to decide." Probably the gaoler concluded that this mode of bringing me to church needed special instructions—he went to seek them, and returned to me no more.

That morning the chaplain sent for me to account to him for my non-appearance at church. The explanation I gave him was that the service was mainly taken from the Prayer Book, which it seemed impious to solemnly repeat as true when you knew it was not so. The chaplain said, "But you know, Mr. Holyoake, that you are in prison, and must do as you are bidden." "Yes, I am quite aware I am in prison. I am under no illusion as to that. Still it does not justify me in addressing to Heaven words not true. If you will arrange that I may come into church at the time when you commence to preach, I am ready to do that. Your sermon may have newness of thought instructive to me." The chaplain was not displeased, but did not consent, and I never went to prayers or sermon.

One day towards the end of my term the chaplain thought he ought to do something to change my views, and asked whether I would accompany him to the chapel and talk in a friendly way on the subject of spiritual conviction. As to that I remarked "I had undergone one conviction, and felt no desire for another." However, assenting, we went together to the chapel, where he entered the reading-desk, I remaining standing where he left me. Seeing that, he civilly pointed to a front bench for me to be seated, and began a little oration to me, the sole member of his congregation in that gloomy chapel, where every seat had borne the impress of a thousand scoundrels. When he came to the end he asked me "what I had to say." Receiving no reply, he concluded he was making an impression, and began another short address, at the end of which he again asked me my opinion. As his auditor still remained silent, he took heart again and commenced a third little oration. A third time he appealed to me for some expression of opinion upon his arguments. I then said, "I had no opinion to give. He had spoken to me officially as chaplain, and addressed me as a prisoner, and in that character it was my lot to listen to him. If he wished me to converse with him, he must treat me on a footing of equality. That place was too cold for reasoning," it being an inclement month. He then asked me to accompany him elsewhere. Arriving at a warm cell, where blankets were aired, we had some friendly argument, and he asked me to accept a present of a Bible. It was thought a great thing to give me a Bible. As it had occasioned my imprisonment, it was bad taste to offer it to me ; it was not calculated to excite my gratitude. The copy he offered me was a little, squab, dumpling edition, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge at 10d. I remarked to the chaplain, "I should not like to carry a mean-looking little book like that. It was not respectful to God to present His Word in that curmudgeon form ; but I would accept a better-looking copy, with marginal references down the centre, such as might assist me in trying to reconcile what appeared to me its many contradictions." So our interview ended, but the 7s. 6d. edition upon which I had fixed my mind never came to hand.

The prisoners I found in the common room were, with one exception, ignorant, and were there for acts of violence, or

minor thefts, or frauds. In the day-time I kept a little school and taught them something. One was a young, good-looking man, belonging to London, whom I thought well of. When his term of imprisonment was up, I entrusted him with two volumes of Hume and Smollet's "History of England," which I had in numbers, to get bound for me, and deliver at the *Oracle* office in London, and I gave him money to pay for the binding. My confidence was not successful, as he kept the money and sold the books.

The chief prisoner was a Mr. Wall, who had been postmaster at Cheltenham, said to have been put in that office by the influence of a peer, for reasons relating to his birth. He had opened letters and taken the money out. One case was very shocking. A servant-girl had saved her money up and sent it to a soldier in the army. Never receiving any answer, she thought him unfaithful, and poisoned herself. Receiving no communication, as she had promised him, the soldier thought she had deserted him, and shot himself. This scoundrelly postmaster was pleasant-spoken, gentlemanly, and cultivated. His criticisms of some things I wrote were instructive to me. He was entirely pious, and punctual at prayer, but a knave at heart.

My liberation occurred some time before Wall's, and he wrote to me shortly after, making in his letter some defamatory remarks upon the governor, and, thereby, implying that I shared the writer's views. As the governor would read the letter, he might think that, despite my professions of respect for him when in his charge, I had used different language privately. Captain Mason, however, wrote upon the letter himself saying that "he did not believe that Wall's expressions were warranted by any remarks of mine, as he had always found me honourable in my statements." This was handsome in Captain Mason, and increased my regard for him.

My prison companions, therefore, were not of an edifying or improving class; but there were other discomforts, different and far more disquieting, which will never depart from my mind. Word was sent me that my child was ill, and then a letter came saying she was dead. The governor considerately called me out into the yard, and gave it to me. It was not till after my liberation that I knew the manner of her death. The

sole income of home was from subscriptions from friends in various parts of the country, supposed to average 10s. a week ; but it was not regular. A few days before the fever took the child, her mother was carrying her through Bull Street, Birmingham, when she cried from hunger for a bun in a window. There was no penny to buy it, and the frenzied mother slapped the child to quiet her. She never forgave herself for doing that, and forty years later she oft repeated the last words of the child on the night of her death, when she exclaimed that " I was coming to see her "—repeated them in the tones of the child which went into the mother's heart for evermore.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### *OTHER TROUBLES IN PRISON.*

(1842-3.)

OWING to a Chartist prisoner having died in a neighbouring gaol from disease contracted through bad air, bad diet, and damp, as poor Holbery of Sheffield had done, a Commission was sent down by the Government to take evidence. Dr. Bisset Hawkins, with his sharp look and scrutinising eyes, was at the head of it. The Commissioners came round the cells and asked me, among others, whether I had any complaint to make. I said "Yes." One night, between 9 and 10 o'clock, the gaoler came into my cell and told me to dress, as the Commissioners wished to see me. On arriving before them, and observing Captain Mason and the surgeon were present, I held my peace. Reminded by Dr. Hawkins that they sent for me, understanding I had a complaint to make, I explained they could not expect to obtain evidence from prisoners in the presence of the governor, since they would remain in the power of those who might resent afterwards what a prisoner had said ; even the surgeon had many ways of retaliation. The governor had behaved to me with courtesy and humanity. He was always a gentleman, and if he had had to hang me he would have apologized for the inconvenience to which he was putting me and have had the bolt withdrawn while I was saying "Don't mention it." It was not that I had any distrust of the governor, but I wished to show the Commissioners that they were not going the way to collect prison facts for an honest report. Dr. Hawkins said, "Captain Mason and the surgeon had better leave." Observing me still silent, Dr. Hawkins asked the

cause. I answered that the Commissioners ought to give a prisoner a guarantee that no personal consequences should ensue to him after they had left, as he would still remain in the hands of the authorities without protection, if they took offence at any allegation he made. Dr. Hawkins assured me that that should not occur.

Then I explained that in that gaol the health of prisoners was in the hands of a kind-hearted but timorous surgeon, who owed his appointment to the magistrates, and had not the resolution or independence to act upon his own judgment when it conflicted with their political, theological, or personal prejudices against prisoners. They explained to me that if a surgeon failed in his duty he was responsible. I answered that was so, but a prisoner must die before the responsibility could be brought home to the surgeon, and that was very grave consolation. They seemed amused at my unconscious use of the word "grave," for they remembered that it was owing to the recent death of a prisoner that they were sent down to inquire into the cause of it. I added that county magistrates did not seem very bright, and had no clear idea of their duties. The Commissioner did not encourage me in these remarks, but they were made before they could stop me. I said some of the cells were filthy and some beds alive with vermin. No prisoner expected tenderness, but cleanliness ought to exist, together with security for life. The dependent position of the doctor, however, afforded none, unless a prisoner was a criminal, then the authorities had no prejudice against him. Neither could they get at the truth they were sent to inquire into and make an honest report to the Crown, unless they caused it to be understood that prisoners who gave them information would be protected. They promised me again that no resentment should follow; nor did it. The governor was civil as heretofore, and the doctor kindly gave me a mutton-chop in my broth. Though inclined to vegetarianism I was glad of that.

The Commission reported finally that Gloucester Gaol lay low, was unhealthy, and recommended that the gaol in which the Chartist died should be superseded. No doubt the poor Chartist was killed in it, all according to law, as poor Holbery was, and as Ernest Jones was nearly killed. No Irish prisoner has run greater risks. Thomas Cooper would have fared no

better save for his wondrous personal resistance. They thought they had driven him mad before the authorities relaxed their restrictions. Under the rules of the gaol, the authorities could have killed me had I resisted indignity as Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Mandeville did, and would have run me very near to it had not Sir James Graham and Mr. Roebuck been my friends.

The quality of mind of the visiting justices who had me in charge may be seen in this instance. At the Christmas, which occurred during my imprisonment, it came to their knowledge that a poor labourer had got himself under a short sentence, in order to be in gaol on Christmas Day ; for on that "day of glad tidings" it was the kindly custom to mark it to the desolate prisoners by a treacle dumpling, with a few raisins in it. It was not much of a taste of the "glad tidings," but it gave pleasure ; to some believing hearts among the prisoners it was comfort, and it gave the only sign, all the year round, that they lived in a Christian land. Instead of being struck with compassion that there should be an honest labourer, so hopeless of tasting a bit of Christmas pudding as to get himself incarcerated for a week for that transient pleasure, the magistrates, three clergymen among them (the Rev. and Hon. Andrew Sayer, Rev. Dr. Newell, Rev. Samuel Jones, the chaplain concurring), abolished Christmas pudding on Christmas Day for all the prisoners there, evermore. Thus these clergymen taught the prisoners to rejoice in the "glad tidings of great joy" brought by Christ. Because one poor workman got into prison against Christmas pudding day, they reasoned from that single instance that all the workmen of Gloucester would, if they knew it, get into gaol from the same cause ! It is said to be a sign of the ignorance of the people that they reason from a single instance, instead of from a majority of similar instances. But here were magistrates, educated at college, as ignorant as the uninstructed rabble, and more cruel.

After a time, Sir James Graham, in answer to a memorial of mine, sent word for me to be allowed to sit up at night until nine o'clock. It was a great waste of time for me to be shut up in darkness from four o'clock in winter-time until eight o'clock next morning, sixteen hours. I contrived some mitigation by secreting the cover of a book, sticking pins in the sides at even

distances, and running a thread across from side to side. It resembled the page of a ruled copy-book—save that the lines were elastic. By running a sheet of paper under the threads I could write with a pencil in the dark, between the lines. In this way I prepared articles for the *Oracle of Reason*, and got them conveyed as opportunity offered to the post. This night work implied sitting up in bed, and against this was the cold. For two months I was never warm. Besides, I was deteriorating in other ways. My pillow was of coarse sacking stuffed with cocoa-nut fibre, so hard that it flattened and elongated my ears beyond the length which my adversaries expected to find in a person of my way of thinking.

So it was welcome news when Sir James Graham's order came. But Sir James had never been a prisoner (all Home Secretaries ought to be imprisoned before taking office), and did not know that the magistrates would construe every instruction against the prisoner. As he did not say he intended to grant the continuance of fire and light, they construed his kindly interference to mean permission to sit up in cold and darkness. Then I began to regret my disbelief in future perdition, as there was no adequate place hereafter to which these magistrates could go. In this respect imprisonment did succeed in shaking my faith a little.

One night, many years afterwards, in the smoking-room of the House of Commons, I mentioned to Sir Wilfrid Lawson that I cherished grateful memories of his uncle for his generous interference on two occasions on my behalf when I was a prisoner, with no other friend in authority save himself. At another time Sir Wilfrid told me that it was a consolation to Sir James Graham to hear what I had said, "for though he had served his country for many years, and not unsuccessfully, he feared he would only be remembered as the Home Secretary who opened Mazzini's letters." Lord Aberdeen denied that the contents of the letters were communicated to the Austrian Government. Unfortunately, you do not always know when a minister speaks the truth. It is their custom to give a technical answer which is beside the point of the inquiry. The letter might be shown to the Austrian minister without a copy being officially communicated to him. Anyhow, the brothers Bandiera, of noble family, were captured and shot in

consequence of Mazzini's letters being opened. If Sir James did communicate a letter he had opened to a foreign power, he did no more than all Home Secretaries had done before, and he was no worse than his predecessors. All Home Secretaries since have opened letters, and do so still. There is a popular understanding that an English Home Secretary shall not act as a spy for foreign governments. But I remember no assurance being given that they shall never so act. The intention of Liberals in 1844 was not to hold up Sir James Graham as worse than other Home Secretaries, but to stop the system which prevailed in his office when he came to it. It is conceivable that he thought foreign ministers were as just-minded as he was, and would use information for precaution, and not for murder. Anyhow, there has been no Home Secretary in my time who has shown the same regard for the self-respect and rights of unpopular prisoners as Sir James Graham showed towards me.

We had few friends in those days, but there was one whom those of us who went out in the forlorn hope never forget, and to whom I gratefully inscribed my "History of the Last Trial by Jury for Atheism" :—

WILLIAM JOHN BIRCH, M.A.,  
Of New Inn Hall, Oxon.,  
Who in the "evil days" of Free Discussion  
Was its courageous and Liberal Defender ;  
And was first to help us  
*When a Friend is twice a Friend*—  
When we were unknown and struggling.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### *WHAT HAPPENED AFTER IMPRISONMENT.*

(1843-80.)

AFTER the affair with Mr. Justice Erskine, I could not retire from public advocacy. I should have been thought a coward ; my treatment would have been tried on others ; many would have been discouraged if I had shown signs of giving way, and the enemies of free opinion would have triumphed and grown insolent. During my imprisonment it was suggested to me by the chaplain that I might do better by accepting for myself a situation as master of a school in which my wife could be appointed mistress, and this could be arranged if I would desist from the advocacy on which I had embarked. That doleful ending was not to my mind. It was also suggested to me that I might free myself by petition and submission. Not only would I not do it, but I gave notice to my friends that I should count it as an outrage if any one did it in my name, or on my behalf. My wife would have resented it had I done it on her account. So when I was free I took the warpath again.

To compare a small affair with great ones, had I been, like Savonarola or Bruno, subjected to torture and fire, I know not how I should have behaved, for I have no taste for rack or torch. But such trouble as can now befall a wilful person—imprisonment, darkness, privation, cold, and insult—is supportable, though death may come that way.

Wherever I was advertised to lecture, some enthusiasts who engaged me described me as one who had been delivered by the spiritual police to the “secular arm.” I never objected to this, because it was defiance—but it was not profit. As soon as I could get means of travelling after my liberation, I went down

to Cheltenham and repeated the words which led to my sojourn at Gloucester, on the ground that I had been called upon to pay a certain price for free speech, and that, as I had paid the price, I had purchased the right. This was not good law, but it was good defiance, and that was what I meant.

One effect of the reputation of having been imprisoned appeared in 1846 where it was least to be expected. Mr. William Ellis, a great friend and admirer of Mr. J. S. Mill, founded some secular schools in London, and defrayed their expenses himself. One was intended for the National Hall, Holborn. Mr. William Lovett was secretary of the proposed school, as he was of the committee of the National Hall. He had been imprisoned himself two years in Warwick Gaol for political reasons. Francis Place was one of the consulting authorities of the intended school. I offered myself for the office of teacher with his consent. Mr. Lovett, the secretary, to whom I wrote upon the subject, never replied to any communication I made to him. When, after some months, the matter was brought to his notice, he said "he understood Mr. Place would reply to my letters." But Mr. Place had never received them. Mr. C. D. Collet and Mr. Serjeant Parry, members of the committee, complained of Mr. Lovett's conduct. Mr. Lovett was employed by Mr. Ellis to conduct one of his secular schools, and he had an income from Mr. Ellis as long as he lived. But so strong was his prejudice against me, who had been imprisoned for heresy, that he who had been incarcerated for sedition was unable to be civil to me. I told him that, if it should appear to the promoters of the school that my being a teacher of it would be detrimental, I should myself object to my own appointment. Heresy in theology proved a much more serious thing than heresy in politics ; and that avenue of employment was closed.

At one time a publisher who had known me as a social advocate conceded me employment in his house. This being a friendly act, my first thought was what would happen to him if I went. I thought in the interests of my employer that I should always be called by a writing name I had elsewhere used, to neutralize my identity where, if obtruded, the consequence would fall upon others. My own name would be sure to incite inquiries.

Mr. Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New York Tribune*, gave to an Irish journalist of mark in New York (Thomas Ainge Devyr, before named) a letter of introduction to me. I granted him writing quarters in my publishing house in Fleet Street, and was at willing trouble to be of service to him. On his return to America he wrote a singular paper, setting forth the causes in operation, which would lead to war before long on the question of slavery. This was three years before the war broke out, and when Devyr's calculations were published neither the journalists of England nor those of America believed that war was coming. When it came, three years later, I put this prediction in the hands of several members of Parliament in this country, as an instance of the political foresight of my friend. The paper consisted of several columns. It happened that I never read more than two, and their purport being striking, I lent the paper to valued friends, thinking the whole of it was of the nature of the part I had read. Some years after, curiosity led me to peruse the whole, when I found that it contained indignant reproaches of my friend, Horace Greeley, for having given a letter of introduction to me, as, I being a person well known to hold theological opinions not at all in request, his acquaintance with me was a disadvantage to him ; and more to the same uncomplimentary effect. Thus had I been circulating among my public friends this disparaging account of myself. My object was to exalt the reputation of my visitor for political sagacity ; all the while I was doing my best to destroy any social reputation I might have. This was another instance in which my residence at Gloucester gave me a profitless distinction ; it lent to me a luminosity of a sulphurous kind, which caused me to be distinguished in a crowd.

Some years later Mr. Devyr wrote to me soliciting some friendly offices at my hands, which I had the pleasure to perform, as I had great regard for him on account of perilous services he had rendered to Ireland. But I now took the precaution of reading all through his communications before they passed from my hands. When I visited New York some twenty years later, my ambiguous visitor at Fleet Street appeared on a public platform at Cooper Union, and claimed to bear his testimony in my honour for the advantage to him of the courtesy and kindness I had shown him when he was a

stranger in London. It was quite an unexpected incident. He had become grateful for what he had been ungrateful.

Sometimes, when engaged to deliver co-operative lectures, an excited grocer would write a letter to a paper in the town asking if I was not the same person who had given trouble to the saints on a certain occasion. My friends who engaged me did not care for this, but feared it might harm the society—I was engaged no more. This sort of thing only excites curiosity now, and increases an audience. It excited terror then.

The incident to be related in the chapter on W. E. Forster would never have occurred but for my heretical reputation ; nor would the proposal of certain of the Oddfellows to deprive me of the prizes awarded to me have been made. It was brought against the Society for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge that I reported in the *Reasoner* proceedings of Mr. Collet, the secretary, Mr. Serle, who wrote under the name of "Caustic" in the *Weekly Dispatch*, made this charge. That most Radical paper was against the Repeal.

When Garibaldi was at Brooke House, I drove nine miles across the Isle of Wight to a telegraph station, that information might reach a London daily, at the request of their reporter, who could not get the news. I paid the expense of the telegrams as well as the charge for the vehicle. Telegrams making a mere paragraph were several shillings then. I was refused any payment at the office, though my communication was used. It was not prudent of me to complain, as my secular wilfulness was remembered and marred my eligibility for engagements. Sometimes I contributed to papers without my work being recognized or paid for, or when paid for I was often precluded from owning to my own articles if I was asked the question, lest the knowledge should damage the paper. In some instances, I should certainly have been on the staff of public journals but for my heretical disqualification. The editor was not afraid, but he was afraid lest other people should be afraid. The only instance to the contrary in those days was the proprietor of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, who was never afraid of anything or anybody, so far as I could discover.<sup>x</sup>

Sometimes my books were not reviewed because it was not

<sup>x</sup> These Chapters, save a few additional ones, are reprinted from the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

to the editor's interest to mention my name ; sometimes, as in the *Quarterly Review*, they were reviewed without my name as author ; six other books were reviewed at the same time, and as the omission of my name looked singular, the editor struck out their names, and seven books without authors were duly reviewed. Sometimes my books were reprinted, as in Paisley, without the name of the writer ; sometimes, as in America, " Public Speaking and Debate " was reprinted with the name of a minister on the title-page, and a preface by the reverend gentleman, that the reader might have instruction without the danger of knowing to whom he owed it. Many hours' amusement all this consideration afforded me ; and made me recall the lines—

" Yes, I am proud, and must be proud to see  
Men, not afraid of God, afraid of me."

When I first went out in defence of reason and freedom as against dogma and restriction, experience taught me that I was shutting myself out from opportunities of advantage open to others, and I felt neither surprise nor regret when the evil days came. As I have said already, imprisonment was never to my taste. I never wished it : I never sought it—I never feared it. I have exposed myself to it many times since, and would do it again now for a just principle ; but no man will persuade me that persecution is an advantage to any cause or any person. But it is a great dignity when incurred from a sense of duty or resistance to dishonour. I neither provoked persecution nor shrank from it. Though no one else desired freedom, it is enough for me that I desire it ; I would maintain the conflict for it as best I could, though no one else cared about it ; and, as I chose to make the purchase, I do not higgle about the price. Tyranny has its soldiers ; and why not freedom ? While thousands daily perish at the shrine of vice, of vanity, and of passion, what is the pain of a sacrifice now and then for a public principle ?

Innovation in theology is more serious than innovation in politics. Politicians are always dealing with new facts ; and affairs of years ago are soon swept out of memory by the current of new interests. Political parties unpopular a few years ago may be in ascendancy to-day, and sedition in the past becomes

patriotism in the present. But in ecclesiasticism all is different. The Church forgets no offence against it, and rarely forgives it. The part taken in Liberal policy by the great statesmen of France and England at the end of the last century none but historical students remember ; but every fool in the streets, in every town and village, knows that Voltaire and Paine were against the priests. Theology is always in power. The party of reason is always in a minority, and a prisoner for heresy is always under condemnation, though his sentence may have long since expired. Indeed, instead of ceasing at his death, it increases. Charges he might answer if living no one answers for him, since he would himself be suspected who did so.

Experience convinced me of one thing. A man need not, like Crusoe, betake himself to the peril of the sea to fall upon a desert island. Any one of strong individual views soon finds himself upon one at home. Insight of things not perceived by your fellows and which they do not wish to see, but which you insist upon making known, create a desert island around you before you are aware of it, and you find yourself dwelling with far-off neighbours. Unknown truth is to the ignorant an unknown terror—a terror because the nature of the new idea is unknown in its relations to the familiar. The propagandist is regarded as the Brahmin regarded the microscope—not as making evident living creatures before unperceived, but as creating the new objects revealed. When new truth is regarded as a heresy, he who maintains it may be glad if his fate is to be only deserted, and not driven out, like the passenger in a plague ship, to perish in the loneliness of the ocean. But too much is not to be made of the disadvantages of taking sides. All opinion has its penalties. Nor would those I have cited be worth recounting, except to show those who seek truth or usefulness, that inconvenience may arise ; and that being forewarned, they may not be discouraged by surprise, and look back.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*A REMARKABLE COUNSELLOR OF PROPAGANDISTS.*

(1843-55.)

IN my time I have known many generous lawyers, but no one who took so wide an interest in freedom of opinion, in political and social progress, or who was the counsellor of so many publicists, who as the writer of this chapter did, by opinionative wilfulness got themselves into unforeseen trouble.

Mr. William Henry Ashurst was an eminent City solicitor of London. He was a colleague of Sir Rowland Hill, and was counted the second person to whom the success of the Penny Postage was due. He was the trusted legal adviser of Robert Owen. He held Owen's principle—that human circumstance had a controlling influence on human action. When called upon professionally to decide whether a servant guilty of defalcation should be prosecuted, he would cause inquiry to be made as to whether poverty, or the pressure of a family beyond means of support, or strong temptation had overcome natural honesty—showing that the exercise of mercy might afford an opportunity for recovering character. Thus he saved many from transportation and ruin. Where a defaulter was without moral principle, he left him to the law. Thus an intelligent principle of compassion, not based on sentiment or on Biblical authority, but upon human considerations, rescued many who would otherwise have been lost.

Under the name of "Edward Search," Mr. Ashurst was a frequent writer in the Boston *Liberator* of Lloyd Garrison, assisting him by counsel, pen, and purse in the battle for negro freedom. Publicists in England and in other nations brought

into conflict with the law, in endeavours to extend the limits of freedom in politics or opinion, often found their way to Mr. Ashurst, whose advice and aid were always at their command. Thus, when my trial in Gloucester befell me, I was introduced to him, and he was my friend all his days. Mr. John Morris, who succeeded to the business, and Mr. Shaen, were trained in Mr. Ashurst's office, both became distinguished solicitors, and alike rendered the same generous counsel to propagandists who had trouble with authority. Mr. Ashurst's son, William Henry, afterwards solicitor to the Post Office, followed in the discerning and merciful steps of his father. Mr. Ashurst had in his own mind the intellectual freedom he defended for others. He believed in the wise maxim of Lucretia Mott, whom he greatly esteemed—"Truth for Authority, not Authority for Truth."

Believing that social ideas would one day largely occupy the attention of society, Mr. Ashurst bought, in 1849, a paper entitled *The Spirit of the Age*, which had been projected by Robert Buchanan, father of the present poet. The paper was about to cease, and the purchase money given for it was of the nature of a gift in acknowledgment of services the conductors had otherwise rendered to social progress. For three months they were retained upon the paper, out of consideration to them, with power to have articles of their own inserted. I received the appointment of editor. My advice was in favour of paying the former conductors the salaries accorded them, and commencing the paper on the new lines of studious "fairness towards the middle and the industrious class," whom it was designed to influence or benefit. Mazzini had consented to write; so had one who afterwards became a Cabinet Minister, two members of the French Provisional Government, and others whose names would have given distinction to the paper, which was intended to be what *The Leader* afterwards was.

In the meantime, the retained contributors, who had acquired class anger in many social conflicts, wrote in hostility to the dispassionate views of the new proprietor. In the last number over which they could exercise the right of insertion, they announced a new paper to be started by themselves. As public support was then very limited, there was little prospect of establishing *The Spirit of the Age*, with a rival journal arising as it were out of itself. I therefore advised Mr. Ashurst that

he would lose all further money which he intended to devote to the enterprise, and that he had better consider the £600 he had already expended as wholly lost. Thus I terminated my own appointment more valued by me than any other which had then been accorded me.

Mr. Ashurst wrote a final notice which was expressed with force and dignity, saying, "It is due to our readers to inform them that with this number *The Spirit of the Age* ceases. He who took the paper and defrayed its entire liabilities has since sustained it, to see whether an addition of quantity, more care in its superintendence, and a well considered devotion to the interests of those whose views it was intended to advance, would obtain for it that support which would give it an independent existence. The experiment would have been continued longer, money not being essentially important; but it appears that, unless the paper is conducted in the same tone and style under which it arrived at death's door, it will not be satisfactory to those who had originally issued it, and who had sought our aid to prevent its termination. Our own views are that just ends should be sought, and ought to be sought by peaceable means. All subscribers who have paid in advance for copies will have returned to them the residue due to them."

The discontinuance of this journal was an advantage to those who had projected a rival paper, as it left the field clear for them. They, however, regarded the advice I had given which led to the cessation of *The Spirit of the Age* as implied censure upon them, which indeed it was. Thus, without deserving it, I incurred their dislike, and the hostility and disparagement by the principal of them, Mr. Lloyd Jones, were protracted through thirty-four years.

Mr. Ashurst was a shrewd judge of efficiency. To the writer of the foreign summary of *The Spirit of the Age*, in which Mr. Ashurst observed vacancies where facts were wanting, he said, "How do you write your summary—from notes?" The reply was, "Oh no, I do not need to do that. I write from memory of the week's news." Mr. Ashurst answered, "The plan has the advantage of saving you the remorse of knowing what you omit."

While I was responsible for *The Spirit of the Age*, I devised a tabular slip of paper on which appeared the number printed,

the number sold, the sum received for papers, the sum received for advertisements, cost of paper, weekly average of rent, taxes, and office expenses, the amount paid for salaries and contributions ; total outlay and total loss or gain. This statement I delivered every Saturday to Mr. Ashurst, that he might have at a glance true knowledge of the fortunes of his enterprise. It was a rule in my mind to do what was just, and to take care that others to whom I was answerable saw that I did it, and had not the trouble of inquiring for their own satisfaction. This seemed to me to be due towards those who trusted me.

In many ways I was indebted to Mr. Ashurst's friendship. Desiring to attend lectures at the London University, impossible to me with my means, he made me a loan of £50 to enable me to do it. A year or two afterwards I repaid him by instalments which seemed unexpected to him, as though his experience had not lain much in that way. He was pleased, however, more for my sake than his own. There was no other idea in my mind than that of repaying him. It was a greater gratification to return the loan than to receive it. Upon paying him the last amount he sent me to his cashier, Mr. Mayer, to get the repayment recorded in his ledger, lest it might appear hereafter as still due. This really happened. Mr. Mayer deferred and neglected to make the entry, and after Mr. Ashurst's decease it was mentioned to me that the amount appeared as still owing. The receipt given me by Mr. Ashurst I was then unable to find, and I was told not to trouble about it, as my word was sufficient. Some years later the receipt turned up, and was sent to the family who had so handsomely accepted my word. This was resented as amounting to distrust of their assurance. That was not so. Their word was the same to me as a new receipt, but it was simply following the rule I observed with Mr. Ashurst of making it clear on the first opportunity that the fact corresponded with my word.

When the *Leader* newspaper company was being formed, a provisional meeting was held at the Whittington Club. Mr. Ashurst, who took shares in the paper, attended the meeting. Quite unforeseen by me, he said "he had come to meet the promoters for the purpose of saying that he understood that Mr. Holyoake was to be the manager of the paper. He therefore wished to say that he had held a similar appointment under

him, and had saved him a thousand pounds by his advice, when it was to his interest that he (Mr. Ashurst) should go on expending the money, and that Mr. Holyoake was the only person connected with the ink pot, with whom he had had relations, who had repaid him when he had taken a pecuniary interest in his affairs."

This speech took me very much by surprise. I can see now, writing forty years later, that I ought at once to have risen and thanked Mr. Ashurst for his generous tribute, of which I knew nothing beforehand. That certainly is not "presence of mind" which occurs to you forty years after the event. I was confused, and said nothing. Mr. Thornton Hunt, with his quick kindness, saw the reason of my silence, and he and Mr. Lewes made acknowledgments for me in terms which placed me under obligations to them for their courtesy and confidence. Thus it was not always a disadvantage to me to have done what I conceived to be right without considering whether it was for or against my interest to do it.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### *RICHARD CARLILE THE PUBLISHER.*

(1843.)

OF two men who were for a time contemporaneous—both famous in a different way, both impassable in their opinions—one was English in everything, the other Scotch in everything—one was Richard Carlile, the other Thomas Carlyle.

Richard Carlile was best known to me. It was in 1841, on my first Sunday in London, that I first met him. It was on one of the few days allowed me to prepare for my trial at Gloucester. As I was passing Blackfriars Bridge at two o'clock in the afternoon, I saw approaching a short, thick-set gentleman, with piercing eyes and pleasant though resolute expression of countenance. The beams of the sun, then fiercely descending, lent animation to his features. The friend with me stopped and introduced me to Richard Carlile. He greeted me with many friendly words of commendation, which I valued as coming from a veteran prisoner for opinion to one who had scarcely entered the ranks. He told me he had to speak that night at the Hall of Science in the City Road, a building constructed in a waggon yard, near the Bunhill Fields Cemetery. The hall was put up by Mr. Mordan, the well-known inventor of the gold pen, in order that Rowland Detrosier might speak there. Carlile said he was to lecture upon "The New Scientific Interpretation of the Scripture," and expressed a wish that I should take part in the discussion thereon—which I did, as is related in the chapter on the "Origin of Secularism."

It was an additional attraction to me to go to the Hall of Science, as I should see the place in which Detrosier lectured,

and speak myself there. Rowland Detrosier was dead then. He was a foundling, bearing his mother's French name, and was educated in a Manchester Benevolent Vegetarian Institution, where he came to be a kind of preacher, and astonished, not only his congregation, but the city, by taking geological stones into the pulpit and telling their story to his hearers. Few people in those days knew or believed that stones had a story to tell. Detrosier had French vivacity and a voice like Lord Brougham's. An address which he delivered on the subject of the "Elevation of the Working Class," was printed by John Cleave in London, and became as famous as Dr. Channing's address on a similar subject. This led to his being invited to London by the political reformers of that day. John Stuart Mill took great interest in him, and after his death contributed to the support of his widow for many years. Detrosier died in a little street off Seymour Street, the first as you turn out of Euston Road. The cause of his death was a chill taken by riding on an omnibus from Whitechapel, after lecturing in a heated room. I first read of his death in the *Argus* of Birmingham, published by Mr. Allday, of whom I have made mention. Subscriptions were asked for Detrosier's family. I sent tenpence, the whole contents of a little copper money box which I had made myself. This was my first public subscription. The story of Detrosier's career and singular ability fascinated me, and having a little brother born at that time requiring a name, I persuaded my mother to call him Rowland. She gave him the name of Walter Rowland. She had a suspicion of outlandish names, and put Walter before it to civilize it.

When my trial came on, Mr. Carlyle came down to Gloucester and remained all the ten days the assizes lasted ; he was in court with me to counsel me in my defence, and was, as I have said, my first visitor after the sentence. In one of the last articles he published in the *Warrior*, he wrote—"I was present in the court to witness the trial of George Jacob Holyoake. I heard Wooller and Hone defend themselves successfully in 1817 ; but I would prefer to be declared guilty with Holyoake to being acquitted on the ground of Wooller and Hone."

Before my liberation in 1842 Richard Carlyle was dead.

Following the example of Jeremy Bentham, Carlile left his body for dissection, and Mr. Lawrence, the eminent surgeon, was the operator. Mr. Lawrence had published a volume of "Lectures on Man" which caused him for a time to be regarded as of Carlile's way of thinking. They contained some materialistic passages which would excite no interest in these days, biological science having advanced far beyond Lawrence; but when the "Lectures" appeared they were regarded as so serious that the author had to recant them. There is no reason to suppose, any more than in the case of Galileo, that the recanter's opinions were changed.

In the days of Bentham, and long after, there was such ignorant prejudice against dissection that "subjects" could not be obtained for the uses of surgical science. This could only be overcome by gentlemen leaving their bodies for dissection. Jeremy Bentham, Richard Carlile, and other distinguished freethinkers ordered their bodies to be given for that purpose. Harriet Martineau gave similar directions with regard to her remains. There is no instance of any distinguished Christian who did this. This generous and courageous devotion to science, though creditable to freethinkers, was a great disadvantage to their cause, and increased the public prejudice against them.

Carlile, like Bunyan, was a tinker. He came to London when a young man, and followed his trade for several years. He had not Bunyan's genius, but he had his courage, and braved imprisonment and endured it with as much heroism as the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

In days when gentlemen were transported for having in their possession Paine's "Age of Reason," Carlile published editions of his works. He was imprisoned himself altogether nine years and three months—his wife was imprisoned also—more than one hundred and fifty of his shopmen were at various times imprisoned. He not only resisted the fetters upon the press, but inspired others to resist. He wrote heretical books, delivered lectures, and by his pen, his speech, and in his person maintained the conflict, until he established a free press. Like Paine, recognition and credit have never been given Carlile because of his heretical sentiments. The enlargement of freedom has always been due to heretics who have been un-

requited during their day and defamed when dead. No publisher in any country ever incurred so much peril to free the press as Richard Carlile. Every British bookseller has profited by his intrepidity and endurance. Speculations of philosophy and science, which are now part of the common intelligence, power, and profit, would have been stifled to this day but for him.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### *THOMAS CARLYLE THE THINKER.*

(1843.)

THE two men whose names sound alike were an instructive contrast. Richard Carlile was all for freedom—Thomas Carlyle was all for despotism. Carlile the publisher, was for every one thinking and speaking for himself. Carlyle the writer was for the silence of all men but himself, and for the uninformed many submitting themselves to the imperious dominion of the wise. Carlyle felt tenderness and taught contempt for the people. He described them as consisting of “thirty millions, mostly fools,” reserving himself as the only well-ascertained exception. In an age when all power was in the hands of the insolent classes he preached the worship of force and ferocity. He no doubt intended that their exercise should be directed against imposture and in favour of truth and justice, but he did not make it sufficiently clear; whereas he should have made the qualification very plain. He applauded Governor Eyre of Jamaica, who added pianoforte wire to the cats with which he flogged working men and women—an act more likely to find imitators than Carlyle’s nobler advice to practise truth and industry. Men in the negro condition, black and white, may one day have their turn of power, when Carlyle’s ferocious approval of Eyreism will invigorate many a cat and sharpen many a knife for use on respectable backs and throats—unless they learn from other teachers that firmness and clemency alone bring security. I sent Mr. Carlyle word that he was nurturing dynamiters.

In politics his influence has been wholly disastrous. On

industry his teachings have been less malign. His theory of the Organization of Labour has given us State Socialists ; but he has been the friend of the industrious by exalting the dignity of labour and inspiring it with honesty of execution. But it seemed never to occur to him that there can be no general pride in labour, nor dignity in it, until it is endowed with the right of profit in its performance.

January Searle (George Searle Phillips, who wrote under this name) told me that at a breakfast at Fryston Hall at which Carlyle was present, on my name being mentioned he observed "that was the man who said there was no God." I had never said that, but Carlyle, though honourably scrupulous about the truth in most things, did not always regard accuracy as of consequence, even where it pleased him to pass judgment. Lord Dalling, who, having been all his life a diplomatist, might be supposed to be familiar with the purport of terms and scrupulous in their application, spoke in one of his last essays of "Thomas Paine the atheist." Had he thought it necessary to proceed upon knowledge, he would have found that Paine was not only not an atheist, but a passionate theist, who founded a Society of Theists in Paris. However, in Carlyle injustice of phrase was artistic picturesqueness rather than malevolence, and when another guest, presuming on what he had said of me, made some disparaging remark concerning me, Carlyle at once stopped him by some fierce and generous words of vindication.

Once, when in Paisley, I had read in a newspaper published there, an attack on Carlyle's opinions, in which the editor confounded his great countryman with Richard Carlile, who was an open heretic. Though complimentary to the party to which I belonged to see it assumed that we had so famous an adherent as Thomas Carlyle, it was not true, and I wrote and pointed out how different a school of religious thought the great Scotch thinker represented from that of Richard Carlile, the English Fleet Street publisher. Probably Mr. Carlyle remembered this when he defended me from conventional aspersion at Lord Houghton's breakfast table.

In what I say of Carlyle here I confine myself to his influence on politics and industry, which mainly concerns me. His personal nobility of character, as it seems to me, is beyond praise, as it is beyond dispute. His intrepid letter in

defence of Mazzini when it was a social peril to one in Carlyle's position to own himself a friend of the great insurgent Italian, was a generous act beyond the reach of common men. But Carlyle knew an honest man when he saw him, and his testimony thereto was at command, come what might. Though Carlyle was the greatest *russian* in literature since the days of Dr. Johnson, he had, like the doctor, the redeeming virtues of honesty and heroic love of truth.

When in Canada, in 1882, I visited Carlyle's sister, Mrs. Hanning, formerly Janet Carlyle, who was then residing at Hamilton in a small detached house. Quite a country garden lay in the rear, from which she gathered bright flowers for my daughter, who was with me—an act of pleasant familiar country life at home which made us forget that Niagara was hard by. Soon after Mrs. Hanning's marriage, which took place near Manchester, England, she emigrated to Canada with her husband. Since her husband's death she had lived alone where we found her, self-dependent in a house "self-contained," as they say in her own country, keeping no servant. Since that visit she has died. She was tall, with decision of manner, and very much resembling in features her illustrious brother. She had a full-length portrait of him, in which he appears reclining against a wall, in a careless manner, with hat in hand—a sketch by Count d'Orsay. Carlyle was quite a young man then. She had also a book-case filled with the costliest editions of her brother's works, which he had sent her from time to time. All his volumes on Cromwell and Frederick the Great were there, and his last book on John Knox. They all bore affectionate inscriptions written by himself. One book which interested me was one given by Mrs. Carlyle to Mrs. Hanning. It was when she was living near Manchester. It bore the inscription, "To Janet Carlyle, with Jane Welsh Carlyle's affectionate regards. Comely Bank, January 10, 1827." It was not long after her own marriage to Carlyle, and apparently she had not anything more costly to send as a memorial of her having entered the family. The book was one of her earlier school books, being a volume of examples in eloquence and composition of the last century—a book which happily had not influenced her own style. That was natural, bright, and elastic, beyond anything I observed in the book, which bore an earlier

inscription than the one I have quoted, namely, "Jean Welsh, 1806," written with attempts at ornament, and the letters dotted round as a child writes its name for the first time. The book was probably sent as a memento of regard, and might have been intrinsically interesting to Miss Janet, and no doubt was, since she had preserved it to that day.

Speaking of Mr. Froude's account of her brother, which was then the talk of America, as it was of England, she said, "Some of my family have sent me a paper wishing me to sign it as objecting to the appearance of the Froude book. I replied I did not wish to sign it." This was said with true Scotch sagacity and prudence. She did not intend to sign it; but she did not offend any one by saying she would not, contenting herself with saying she "did not wish" to sign it—which still left the door open, should she see reason to do it. She added, "Mr. Froude was a friend of my brother, and he whom my brother trusted I think the family should trust. Mr. Froude had no doubt said the thing that was." And then, drawing herself up with a gesture of dignity, she said, "My brother was always for the truth, and so am I,"—a declaration which had the true Carlylean ring in it.

It was Mrs. Carlyle's letters which, being published, had caused the trouble. Carlyle had shown his noble sense of justice by desiring their publication, although he knew the impression they would make would be against himself. I remarked to Mr. Froude one day, when he did me the honour to call upon me, that to desire to publish her letters was in Carlyle an act of justice to her memory. "Yes," answered the great historian, "but what man thinks of doing justice to his wife?" The singular thing is that Mr. Froude, who published these works in obedience to Carlyle's wish, who desired him as his friend to do it, has been censured, as though he had been the author of the letters. It was noble of Mr. Froude to incur all this censure himself through fidelity to his friend, and it seems to me an act of justice to record that Carlyle's sister had honour in her heart for Mr. Froude.

A Spanish scholar left Mr. Carlyle a thousand pounds, who, remembering that the brother of the donor had suffered some reverses, Mr. Carlyle inquired whether he had become free of them, otherwise, if the money would be useful to him, he, the

legatee, desired to place it at his disposal, as he (Mr. Carlyle) was free from prospect of reverse, and he should remember his friend all the same for his generous regard of him. This act implied a nature of natural nobleness. It is common to find men who have a biting tongue, which they cannot restrain, yet possessed of instinctive tenderness and generosity.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### *A VISIT TO THE LAST COMMUNITY.*

(1843.)

WITHIN sixty years there have been four communities in England—Orbiston, Motherwell, Manea Fen, and Queenwood. The promoters were not merely Socialists, they were Communists. As this is still a name of terror, it will interest many readers to have a glimpse of the last place where they had a local habitation and a name.

Cobden, in affairs of trade or peace, had good discernment. In social aims, with which he had little sympathy, he was un-discriminating. In his day communism was a term of alarm in the mind of ignorance, and was exaggerated by interest, which knew better. Though before 1840 there existed community societies, the persons belonging to them were spoken of as "members of the community society," not communists. Communism was a Continental term, scarcely recognized or used in England. Mr. Cobden used it as a term of social spoliation. An English community, as the followers of Robert Owen understood it, was a self-supporting industrial city, distinguished by common labour, common property, and common means of intelligence and recreation. These communal cities were to be examples of industrialism freed from competition. In the communal life an ethical character was to be formed in the young and impressed upon adults, and all assured education, leisure, and ultimate competence. As this was the first systematized social conception in which I believed, and believe no less in it still, it is relevant for me to give some account of the last English attempt to realize it in my time.

On Monday morning, October 14, 1843, I "wended my way," as the novelists say, down by Parliament House, over Vauxhall Bridge, on my visit to Harmony Hall. At the Nine Elms terminus I demanded a ticket for Nine Mile Water, Harmony Hall. "Oh," said the official in the railway office, "you must take a ticket to Farnborough ! that's the station." Taking it for granted that he knew, in five minutes I was on my way to Farnborough, the rain coming down like a workman too late for the factory bell, the wind blowing with preternatural velocity. In due time I alighted at Farnborough Station, and thought, " Well, after all, Harmony Hall is not so far off as people have said," and I looked about for one of the Community vehicles. But I found myself surrounded by a crowd of Frenchmen talking with the explosiveness of volleys of musketry, and I thought, " Surely these people can't belong to Harmony Hall, unless they are the 'hired labourers,' who were then unpopular." I inquired at once for Queenwood. " Queenwood," said the marvelling superintendent, " there was a gentleman once before came here asking for that place. It is forty or fifty miles below. You had better take the next train to Winchester, and then 'inquire again !'" I had nothing to do but to turn myself to the fire and the Frenchmen, in the hopes of finding either warmth or amusement. In a few minutes I found that the Frenchmen were king's attendants waiting for the arrival of Louis Philippe and the Queen, who were expected from Windsor at one o'clock. Before long, I observed some strange-looking men darting off at all angles without any apparent reason, and pushing people about I could not tell why. But soon I discovered their movements followed on the nod and beck of a marble-eyed elderly gentleman, who was, if I mistake not, one of Sir James Graham's special commissioners, whom I saw at Gloucester Gaol, and I knew I was surrounded by the A Division of Police from Scotland Yard, who darted about at every roll of the official orbs before mentioned. I immediately called in all external signs of curiosity, and commenced to wear an entirely neutral look, by which means I noticed everybody in security. When the Royal party arrived from Windsor, even the gaping gentry of the neighbourhood were thrust to the back of the building. At every avenue policemen brandished their batons ; a poor

Frenchman, looking over a gate, was rudely thrust back, and given in charge of the police; and none but officials and myself stood in the narrow passage made for their Majesties to pass. Finding me walking about the rooms, they probably regarded me as a station assistant. I therefore took a position by the side of the police, deeming that the best place for passing unsuspected, and I was right. Guizot first interested me. His half-military dress detracted from his philosophical character, but his well-moulded head and firm features, resting upon his iron-looking shoulders, gave him, though rather a short man, an appearance of majesty which none of their Majesties possessed. He looked one of the princes of what the Chambers styled the "intellectual aristocracy"—a new phrase of that time used by them. Many a Frenchman would envy me. Louis Philippe I could have shot half-a-dozen times, had I been so disposed. There was nothing inviting about him. His cheeks hung like collapsed pudding bags. The only thing to which I could compare his head was an inverted humming-top. The people of France, I learned afterwards, had nicknamed him "Louis le Poire," or the pear-headed, from the resemblance they discovered in his face and head to an inverted pear. And Paris was placarded with pictures of pears bearing his face, with the words annexed, "When the pear is rotten, it will fall," as afterwards happened.

Prince Albert had a right princely appearance. His large German eyes were singularly full and glaring. He looked as though he was well fed, and without care whence his meals came. None of these notables had I seen before. The Queen I had not seen since she was a girl, and I wondered how the cooped-up, swaddled thing I saw in Birmingham when she was eleven years old, had become so graceful a young woman. I was agreeably surprised at her. The breezes of Blair Athol had left her quite blooming, and her pretty Saxon-looking face, beaming both with maternal affection and thought, quite possessed me in her favour. I do but record my impressions at the time. The Royal party passed on to Gosport, for Louis Philippe was going home, having been on a visit to our Court.

About three o'clock I was again on the line making another attempt to get to Harmony Hall. How the wind blows on the

Southampton railway over its uncovered carriages! Even on the Brighton line, then and long after, third-class passengers made the journey in open trucks, where a mother could ill-protect her child from the rain, and with difficulty prevent it from being blown away. Who travel to Hants in October weather should tie caps upon their heads and their heads on their shoulders. My cap, which had seen some service, having had six months' imprisonment, was almost blown into its original fleece, and was near regaining its first abode on the backs of the neighbouring sheep. When I reached Winchester it was half-past four o'clock, and Stockbridge was nine miles off. No conveyance being procurable, and the rain abating, I walked the distance.

At last, regular Egyptian darkness—such as could be felt—set in, but where Stockbridge lay, whether near or far, on hill or in hollow, I knew not. At last, feeling my way with my umbrella, I ran against something that proved to be a ploughman, from whom I learned that I was on the verge of the village, that I must “turn by the Ship, ask for the Queen’s Head, and tell Stone that I was one of the Zozialites,” and I would be all right. There I found a pretty, kind creature of a landlady, and by half-past seven I was engaged with toast and tea, and listening to the song of one of those organized fungi which seem to vegetate about Stockbridge in the shape of farm labourers.

In those days there were no village reading-rooms. Hetherington’s *Poor Man’s Guardian* had never been heard of in Stockbridge. Newspapers were then sixpence and ninepence each, and were seen only by the squire or the clergyman, who never lent them to the cottagers. No union of agricultural labourers was thought of. The company I was in reached the highest point of their existence with a mug of beer and a song. There was no assembly in the Queen’s Head of long pipes and village philosophers such as George Eliot has depicted in “*Silas Marner*.” One of the Stockbridge zoophytes was singing, for the amusement of his companions, a song, of which the best applauded couplet was—

If I had a wife wot blowed me up,  
I’d get a gal and make her jalus.”

Had these lines come upon them with the novelty of originality, the delight they caused could not have been more spontaneous. They quite brought down the tap-room. The landlady smiled from the bar window, partly in applause of the singer and partly to encourage business. This was the high water mark of intellectuality to which the parson and the squire had brought the farm labourers of Stockbridge.

The next morning I set out for Queenwood. It rained then as in the days of Noah. My directions were "to pass through the village, and, at a mile and half onwards, to turn off to the left by a gentleman's house, which would lead me (somehow) to Broughton." I was now fairly in the land of flint and chalk. Everywhere lay flanks of earth, dressed in nature's shabbiest attire—not unlike a man in threadbare hose, and the mounds of white chalk, peeping up here and there, presented the picture of nature out at the elbows. When high on the road that lay "by the gentleman's house," I asked my way of an old villager, who, unfortunately for me, "knew the road well." He sent me along this field, over that, by a stile "which I should be sure to see" (but be sure not to know), and after turning here, and turning there, I should come out (somewhere) in Broughton.

Reader, beware of one who knows the way. Were I about to be hanged (that being the time when persons who never had any wisdom commence to give important advice) the first thing I should warn young persons against would be those people who "know the way." Many a week I have walked five times farther than the real way through following the directions of people who sent me the "nearest" way. When a stranger asks his road, instead of being directed straightforward through highways or well-known streets, which he could not miss, somebody who knows all the lanes and byways, courts and alleys, will send him through them. The moment a stranger enters the first of these, he knows not where he is, and has to spend more time in making inquiries than would take him ten times the actual distance. Some plain-minded person, who knows little about a place, is the man for a guide. In Bristol, when I went in 1841 to visit Charles Southwell, then in prison there for wounding what Lord Salisbury would call the "grotesque susceptibilities" of

Sir Charles Weatherell, I had the good fortune to be taken to Bristol Bridge. This became my centre of transit. Everywhere I went I started from Bristol Bridge. I was never so happy in any town. In London, though always being directed "the nearest way," I am sure I have walked a thousand unnecessary miles.

After a time, I discovered the road I had left, which soon brought me to Broughton, a pleasant village to look at; but all its pleasantness was outside. It was plain and dull enough within. But as it was the first relief from barrenness and stones, one was glad to see it. About a mile through it, over a chalk hill, is the next road to be taken, and as the traveller descends the hill's brow, he comes suddenly upon Harmony Hall—an entirely respectable-looking building, half red, half blue, a compound of brick and slate of oblong shape, with two spires in front, and two glass chimneys, apparently intended to let people see the smoke come up; but further examination tells you they are lanterns over the corridors leading to the dormitories. "C. M. 1841," are observable at one end of the building, which informed me, for the first time, that the Millennium had commenced three years ago.

Verdure and beauty first make their appearance in the neighbourhood of the Hall. Around pleasant prospects arise. But it was a place to look at rather than to live on. The soil had been made productive at great expense; but the flints which covered the land pointed out the place as one intended by nature, not for a colony of Socialists, but for a colony of gunsmiths, who, before percussion caps came up, might have made their fortunes there.

No devisers are perfect all at once, even in community making, and the site chosen for it in Hampshire, remote from any seat of manufacture or of commerce, was a disadvantage. The quality of the soil was also against the success of the agricultural community. Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, being in friendly relation with Robert Owen, was a reason why that site was chosen. Indeed, at that time it was difficult to obtain land anywhere. A beautiful avenue was preserved upon it; a part of the estate called Rosewood, with a sequestered building in it, was entitled to the name. Roads were laid out at great cost worthy of the Romans. An imposing hall was erected by Mr.

Hansom, the inventor of the cab which Disraeli called the gondola of London. It was built as the "new world" should be built. Forged nails, not machine-made nails, were used in fixing lath and plank. The parts out of sight were as honestly done as those in sight. There was nothing mean about the place. The lower rooms had a costly range of windows, the walls were tastefully panelled, the sides of the room were ribbed with mahogany, and all the tables, neither few nor small, were of the same costly material. The place served as a dining-room when I was there. The kitchen had hardly a rival in London for its completeness. So much was expended in this way (£30,000 altogether), that there was insufficient to put into cultivation the Little and Great Bentley farms. It is due to Mr. Owen to state that he never approved of the attempt to establish a community with the insufficient capital then at command. Mr. Galpin, a banker at Salisbury, had subscribed £8,000 or more, Mr. William Pare £5,000. Mr. Frederick Bate put in £14,000, his total fortune bequeathed to him. Half a million of money was necessary to complete the community on the scale on which the board of directors commenced. The administration being democratic, there was no concentration of authority, so indispensable until success had repaid the capitalists. The arrears of rent accumulated, which the profit from the farms was insufficient to meet. The three trustees who were responsible, evicted, in the Irish fashion, the governor and his family, who encamped in the lanes for some days. The trustees then let the estate to George Edmondson, a Quaker and famous Yorkshire educator. It then became Queenwood College, as it is still known. Professor Tyndall was one of the teachers of science there. In a few years £11,000 of profit accumulated, which Lord Romilly, on the suit of Mr. Pare, myself, and others, ordered to be distributed among the principal shareholders, and the place to be sold and the proceeds further divided. Nothing came to the smaller community shareholders, whom I represented. It was clear that this project under purely commercial management might have paid as a social university, and ultimately as an agricultural settlement. Had it not been denounced by the clergy and the Bishop of Exeter, it is probable that Mr. Owen's great influence had obtained capital sufficient to establish an industrial city. Many independent families

contemplated going to reside there, the rent of whose tenements would have made the place prosperous. It was a satisfaction at last to see a noble college established there, in which students were educated in the arts of industry as well as in science and classical literature, which had never been united on so large a scale elsewhere in England. It was one part of the community scheme.

Thus ended the last of the English communities. Proud efforts were made for its success—noble sacrifices on the part of hundreds of working men were made, ungrudgingly and unrepiningly, although all the savings of their lifetime were lost in it. After lectures in the provinces, to this day grey-headed old men and women oft come to me recalling their sacrifices, which they never regret, and still believe they were not made in vain. The intelligent poor in our chief cities were animated with hope when “community” was named. Toil-worn men at the anvil, at the loom, and in the mine, regarded it as opening to them a way to industrial independence out of the otherwise pathless desert of their lives.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### *STORY OF THE ODDFELLOWS PRIZE LECTURES.*

(1845-6.)

THESE chapters appear in general chronological order ; though it is difficult to think over your life in strict consecutiveness of detail. Sometimes incidents come back to the mind which were as much out of sight as though they had emigrated. If a story has interest in itself, and it is apparent when its incidents did occur, the reader is commonly content.

In my youth I had a moderate faculty of memory, which I endeavoured to improve after the manner suggested by Jacotot, who had fascinated me. Taking Pope's "Essay on Man," I learned the two first lines, next day two more, always repeating the lines learned. Thus at the end of a year I could repeat 730 lines ; at the end of the second year I could repeat 1,460. Then the time required to repeat 1,460 lines, with the addition of new lines each morning, obliged me to desist. This daily use of memory no doubt was an advantage to me when I came to deliver lectures. Though I could not always foresee what I should say when I began to speak, I could always tell what I had said when I had spoken. The act of speaking in public fixed the words in my mind as though they were palpable in the air before me. For six months or more after my speech in the Court at Gloucester, I could repeat all I said, though I spoke upwards of nine hours. To this day I remember where I was, in what town, in what place, in what house, or at what exact spot, when a particular thought first entered my mind. It is far from my intention to convey the impression that everything I relate is errorless, unless I have been able to

verify it, for many details of affairs must have passed from my memory. Yet to mean to be right, and to take trouble to be right, is all a narrator can do for the reader, and the reader is not badly used who gets that.

In 1845, it fell to me to go to Glasgow. Scotland was then an unknown world to me, and I set out, as I do still on a new journey, elated and glad with curiosity, not less so then that our way was over the "dour" sea to Greenock. Our little household then included two little ones. We arrived late one evening at a temperance hotel in Liverpool, near to the dock. Temperance hotels were then penal settlements of teetotalism. A rasher of bacon (which had grown black by exposure, and dry as a slice of mummy cat), an old teapot, a chipped cup and cracked saucer, lying in a dusty window, were the outward signs and melancholy emblems of a temperance hostelry in those days.

My engagement in Glasgow was to lecture to a society of Mr. Owen's followers, which held its meetings in a pleasant little chapel in Great Hamilton Street, near Glasgow Green. I was the last of the stationed lecturers, then called "Social Missionaries."

Soon after my arrival I learned that the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows offered five prizes of £10 each for the five best lectures to be read to the members of the Order on taking successive degrees. The subjects were to be "Charity, Truth, Knowledge, Science, and Progression."

Before this time four of the degrees of the Order bore the designations of white, blue, scarlet, and gold. The ceremony of initiation included a marvellous dialogue. For instance, a candidate for the scarlet degree was asked by the Noble Grand, "Whence come you?" Not even Dr. Darwin could answer that question satisfactorily. The candidate dexterously avoided the scientific difficulty, if he was conscious of it, by answering that he came "from Mount Horeb." All the while the man had never been there, and probably did not know even its situation. The candidate was then asked, "Where are you sojourning?" and he replied, "To the inward Court of the Sanctuary." When the further question was put to him, "How will you gain your admittance?" the answer was, "By my sign and password." This does not seem sufficient had there been a real Sanctuary with an Inner Court, which the

Manchester Unity never possessed. The candidate for the gold degree was asked, "Whom do you represent?" and he replied, "The son of Onias, the High Priest, who repaired the House of God and fortified the Temple"—a very respectable delegation if accompanied by genuine credentials. When asked, "In what light will he appear in the Lodge?" he replied, with wondrous self-complacency, "As the morning star or the moon at full, I shall cheer and refresh the minds of my brethren like the sun on the Temple of the Most High or the rainbow in the heavens." These Colney Hatch answers did very well in the first half of this century, but men in the second half could never be got to give them. The Grand Master therefore advised a change.

In justice to the Order it ought to be admitted that the Old Degree Book was not all of this extraordinary complexion. There were some scattered injunctions of worldly wisdom and worth, such as—

"Be honest to yourself and connection.

Follow your occupation whereby to provide personal sufficiency and something over wherewith to relieve distress.

Be honest to your neighbour by not imposing upon or overreaching him.

Be honest, by candidly acting towards your brother, not professing one thing and meaning another.

Be temperate in the exercise of the powers and passions of body and mind.

Be temperate in forming opinion, in expressing it, and in attempting to obtain your wishes.

You are always to recommend to equals courtesy and affability, to superiors kindness and condescension."

These were excellent Senecan sentences. Oddfellowship, like religion, can only sustain and commend itself by association with morality.

In writing the new lectures, I followed the rule I adopted early in life, of never embarrassing myself by conjecturing what other competitors would say, nor by imagining what adjudicators, or readers, or hearers would expect me to say. I simply considered what ought to be said on a given subject—what was

true and relevant as far as I could discern—and endeavoured to say it as plainly and clearly as I was able. Napoleon's one injunction to his secretaries—"Be clear"—seemed to me to include the first duty of author or speaker, and I applied it not only to the sentences, but to the writing of the Prize Lectures. I wrote them out in a plain Palmerstonian hand. Capital letters I printed, so that the beginning of sentences should be well marked. I left a broad margin, in which I wrote in red ink the subject of each paragraph. All the pages of each lecture were put into a separate coloured cover, bearing a cube in isometrical perspective, merely because it was ornamental, and mitigated the dulness of a blank cover. The motto I took was "Justice is sufficient," believing that no one ought to ask for more, and that this would be a happy world if every one got that.

The result of this was that my five books of lectures would be sure to be looked at, and when opened the red letter words in the margin enabled the appointed reader to see at once the method and quality of treatment, and be able at a glance to decide whether they were entitled to further examination. There were 79 competitors for the prizes, and if each sent in five lectures the adjudicators would have 395 to peruse. They would be sure, therefore, whatever the number, to take up first those they could read most easily.

It was probable that some competitors would send in only one or may be two lectures, such as they thought they could best write. Thus it would be difficult to combine five lectures by five different persons in one set, while one person writing the whole would give them due gradation and unity; and unity would be essential. Therefore I sent in five.

As I was a member of the Robert Burns Lodge of Glasgow, I was eligible to compete. Only one person knew of my intention to do so. The method, matter, or manner of what I wrote no one knew. Though, as I have said, there were 79 competitors, and some of them clergymen, none, when they came to read the lectures adopted, complained of the adjudication of all the prizes to me. I had left Scotland long before the award, and had made up my mind I was out of the running, when one day the Grand Master called upon me and handed me five £10 notes. I remember I was much surprised, for I

had never even seen so much money before. It was with this money that I set up the *Reasoner*.

When it became known in the Order that the prizes were awarded to me, some apprehensive members raised the question whether the money ought to be paid to me, or whether the Order ought to use the lectures written by me. An earthquake might happen in the Order if what I had written were read officially from time to time to a quarter of a million of men who belonged to the great Unity, for the memory of Gloucester Gaol was quite lively in the public mind. But the Order was honest, and I was paid. To pay a second time for worse lectures seemed bad economy and bad policy, and so the lectures were adopted. Several years elapsed before I made any public mention of my connection with them. As secrecy was to the interest of the Order, it was my duty to keep silence. Some enthusiastic officer of the Order, anxious to justify their choice, published privately an edition of the lectures for the gratification of members interested in seeing them. This was a serious breach of faith of which I knew nothing. I had taken no part in that step, and would have opposed it had I known of it. Some, indeed, thought I might have done it ; but the directors did me the justice to entirely disbelieve that I had any knowledge of, or connivance in, the surreptitious publication.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### *SINGULAR COINCIDENCES.*

(1846.)

THE shrewder officers of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows were right. Though no rumblings of earthquake were heard in the Order, some premonitory symptoms were felt six years later. But for six years calm pervaded the solid earth of the widespread Unity. Assurance that it would be so came in a letter from the Noble Grand Master of the Robert Burns Lodge, addressed to me in London. He had been attending the Grand Moveable Committee at Bristol, and on his return home he wrote as follows :—

“ 124, GALLOWGATE, GLASGOW, June 11, 1846.

“ SIR AND BROTHER,—Inclosed is an order to any Lodge to which you may go to receive the Quarterly Password and Degree.

“ We had a very fine meeting at Bristol, and I dare say that much has been done to consolidate and improve our Order. I also had the pleasure of perusing our New Lectures. They are splendid essays upon the subjects they treat of, and I wish the Board of Directors may soon get them circulated. I believe they will be the means of doing much good. They will undoubtedly give great satisfaction to all your friends here.—I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

“ THOMAS DONALDSON.”

About 1852 the Unity sought legal protection. The Grand Master of the Order, Mr. William Benjamin Smith, of Birming-

ham, had drawn up a masterly statement of the disadvantages under which the Unity, as a friendly society, lay in respect of the funds being at the mercy of any knavish officer with a gift for plunder. When the protective bill which was passed by the Commons went up to the House of Lords, the Bishop of Oxford opposed it on the ground that I had written their Degree Lectures. The bishop, who was naturally tolerant and fair-minded, had been influenced or misled by statements forwarded to him by enemies of the bill acquainted with the origin of the lectures. What took place then, and how the bishop came to withdraw his opposition, the reader will see recounted in the chapter on the "Generosity of the Bishop of Oxford."

Another objection of a different kind, and not easy to be refuted, might have been brought against the genuineness of the lectures, founded upon a passage in one of them, had any one had the wit to make it. When I was writing the lecture on Charity, I was living in the house of Mr. David Glassford, St. Mirren's Street, Paisley. The house has been pulled down, and the street is all changed now. I sat with my back to a small bookcase, and often rested my head against the glass front as I cast about in thought for some new argument which should be clear and entirely secular. Though Secularism as a new form of thought and action was not then in my mind ; I had merely a taste for reasoning on morality apart from theology. At length I put my argument thus :—

"The great obstacles in the way of the friendly intercourse of man with man are the incurable dislikes which some men have the misfortune to entertain for each other. But when we once agree 'to consider the errors of mankind as arising rather from the want of knowledge than the defects of goodness,' we learn to feel for the most despicable some sympathy on account of their unhappy condition. We see that those who agree not with us have some difference in capacity, constitution, or education ; and, instead of being repelled because their opinions and tastes seem inferior to our own, we are invited by a prospect of improving and enlightening them—for the voice of kindness and intelligence never fails to soften and refine the rugged and the ignorant. Hence we may be charitable to those we deem mentally unfortunate. If we behold a fellow-creature running

counter to his own happiness, we are satisfied that it is rather his misfortune than his fault.

“ This sentiment, that thus has a basis in intelligence, is also justified by self-love and confirmed by human interest. Should you hate your fellow-man, what reason is there that he should not hate you? If you shall regard him but with indifference, you justify him in regarding you with indifference; and why should you provoke only apathy where possibly you might win esteem? But if you fall on the wiser and happier alternative of affection, or at least friendliness, as dislike creates dislike, so love awakens love, the kindlier emotions are reciprocated, and men who else were foes become, by the generous influence of enlightened charity, pacific and fraternal.”

At the time I believed this argument to be entirely new. It never occurred to me before, nor had I ever heard or seen anything like it. Some time after the prizes referred to were awarded, and sent to the press, I was again a guest of Mr. Glassford in the same house and occupying the same room. The day being wet and misty as only a Scotch day can be, I turned to the bookcase against which I had formerly sat, just to see what kind of dusty-looking books my friend kept there. It was necessary in my vocation to understand the Covenanter mind, and this seemed an opportunity of doing it. The narrow bookcase was let into the wall, and previously I had thought it locked. Finding it was not, I opened it, and the very first book I took down was a volume of sermons by Richard Hooker. I had read of the “ judicious ” Hooker, but had never had a work of his in my hands, and I was glad and curious to judge for myself in what the “ judiciousness ” consisted for which he was so much praised. But greater than I expected were my surprise and interest when the very page which I accidentally opened contained exactly the argument I had constructed myself!

Few persons knowing the circumstances under which I had written my lecture on Charity, with the bishop’s volume at hand, would not conclude that my passage was a plagiarism and no coincidence. They would be confirmed in their belief on noticing that in the said lecture I actually cite the following passage:—“ If I do harm I must look to suffer; there being no reason that others should show greater love to me than they

have by me shown unto them" (Richard Hooker : *book i., c. 8, Ecclesiastical Polity*). This passage, when proofs of the Lectures came to me, I was glad to quote, as it might prevent my secular arguments being suspected of heresy. I had no idea that the bishop had preceded me altogether. Had I known it before, I should have quoted his words triumphantly, and have made the fortune of my chapter in the orthodox eyes of the Prize Committee.

Not having opportunity of reading as much as I ought, other instances of this kind have happened to me. Had I been what is called "well read," many things would have been known to me which I had to find out for myself. Still there was consolation in the saying of Hobbes, that "had he read as much as his neighbours did, he would be as ignorant as they were."

Several times (the first in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1862), I had said that Mr. Gladstone was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer known to have a conscience. Others may have had it, but finding no use for it in public affairs, the people had not discerned it. On December 4, 1891, I read for the first time an old newspaper report of Mr. Cobden's speech in Exeter Hall, February, 1855, in which he said, "Mr. Gladstone was a statesman who had a conscience, and when once you had convinced his understanding, you were sure to have his support, whether in office or out of it."

## CHAPTER XL.

### *FRANCIS PLACE AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.*

(1846-60.)

THE Duke of Wellington was a cold, hard, contemptuous, unsympathetic Tory. He had strong sense, honesty, and veracity, and no desire of killing people when they did not stand in the way of carrying out orders. I have known many soldiers who served under him, but none who had affection for him. He treated his men as he did his muskets. He kept them dry and clean, and ready for action. He took the same care of them as he did of his stores—but had no more human regard for them, or personal sympathy with them, than he had for any other war material.<sup>1</sup> When Napoleon found a corporal asleep at his post, he took up his musket, and kept guard until he awoke. Wellington would have called the guard to arrest him, and had him shot. Thousands of soldiers were ready to die for Napoleon. No soldier ever showed eagerness to die for Wellington, and some sought to shoot him. Yet Wellington had the virtue of being an economist in the lives of his men, while Napoleon lavished them. Kleber said Napoleon was a great general at the cost of ten thousand Frenchmen a week.

In the "Life and Times of Queen Victoria," it is said of Wellington that "he never regarded himself as in any sense the servant of the people. It was as the sworn servant of the Crown that he always spoke and acted, and the only test he ever applied to any project of legislation was, whether it was

<sup>1</sup> "Lord Wolseley had declared that Wellington cannot be placed in the first line of Generals because he did not secure, nor even try to secure the affection of his soldiers." *Wellington*, George Hooper. Macmillan, 1889, p. 224.

likely to strengthen or weaken the Monarchy." He looked upon the people simply as persons to be kept in order, and had no idea that liberty and responsibility would enable them to take care of themselves. In military matters it was not possible to impose upon him—concerning social facts he was as credulous as the country Tory vicar of the time. The duke believed the reports that French Jacobin gold incited English agitation. It was regarded as vulgar ignorance when the French Jacobins believed that English gold was the cause of all their trouble. The duke had this vulgar credulity in politics. Though he had been Premier in England, he wrote to the Earl of Malmesbury saying "he entertained no doubt that there exists a formidable conspiracy, but as yet we have not got a trace of it. We certainly had not when I quitted office, nor do I believe the King's servants have." Yet having "no trace" of it, he still believed it.

"We have in this country," he said, "unfortunately, a numerous class of men well educated who go about in gigs. You will ask how are their gigs paid for? I answer I know that the Société Propagande of Paris has at its command very large means from subscriptions all over Europe, but particularly from the Revolutionary bankers in France." The duke could not know this, but in politics he was ready to believe whatever he was told. There never was a Liberal propagandist society that had funds, and bankers were never the persons to supply them. This did not prevent the duke believing they did.

At the time when he was contriving plans for meeting the Birmingham Political Union in the field, and the whole country was convulsed with demands for reform, he said (1) the mass of the people cared nothing for the bill and were neither agitating nor agitated; (2) the agitation, if any, was subsiding; (3) it would subside if time was only given it. This old anti-Reform formula of 1830 is repeated in 1891, with regard to Ireland.

In 1840, when Mr. Owen's Social Agitation was represented by Social Missionaries, whom the Bishop of Exeter proposed to put down by coercion, the duke was told that these men were mostly well-informed, and personally of good character. His reply was, "Oh, yes, they are clever; they are clever devils." In his eyes all political reformers were seditious, and all social reformers satanic.

In the duke's time there was living in London, not far from his residence at Apsley House, a man in every way as unlike the duke in character as he was in station—known as “the Radical Tailor of Charing Cross.” This was Francis Place, who was one day to circumvent the duke at the height of his power.

Place was a working tailor at the beginning of this century. He was somewhat short in stature, solidly built, with a grave, intelligent face. He was self-taught, studious, well-read, with a strong understanding, without passion, and of immovable resolution. He advised young men who had a taste for the work of a publicist, to continue in business until they had saved money and had some to spare, so as to aid themselves any agitation in which they engaged. By being able to give money themselves they would have more influence than though they gave ten times as much in service. He followed himself the advice he gave. His house, then 16, Charing Cross, in which he had a large library, was the place of meeting for the leading Reformers of Westminster, whose projects were matured and whose policy was decided there. Jeremy Bentham encouraged Place both in his prudence and his political usefulness. Bentham, who lived in Queen Square, Westminster, took his utilitarian walks with Place, and accompanied him on his business calls to take orders from his customers, or deliver the garments he had made for them. While Place was engaged within, Bentham would walk outside until his friend emerged again, when they would continue their walks and their political conversation.

One day when Place was detained longer than usual with a customer difficult to please, Bentham sat down on the step, leaning his head upon his hand, probably meditating some constitution for the government of New Brazil, when there came under his eyes an open palm with a shilling in it. The sight aroused him from his reverie, and, on raising his head, he found a gentleman, who hastily withdrew his hand and begged pardon. He had mistaken Bentham for a person in distress needing assistance. But on Bentham looking up with his bright glance, refined expression, and white flowing locks, he saw he was a gentleman. The hand was instantly withdrawn with apologies. Bentham told Place of his adventure with expressions of respect for his kindly intending friend.

Place had great mastery of all the political questions of the day. He defended the views of Malthus with discrimination as against the misconceptions of William Godwin, then in the height of his popularity. Place was regarded as an equal antagonist. Though a friend and sympathizer with the general views of Godwin, he did not hesitate, in the interest of the public, to confute his errors. In the *Monthly Magazine*, and in such of the press as in those days condescended to notice a Radical writer, Place was described as "an independent and original thinker distinguished by research, accuracy, and acumen." Place was the associate and adviser of the leading Philosophical Radicals and others, as Miss Martineau, with whom he corresponded on her "Illustrations of Political Economy." So high an opinion had James Mill of him, that he entrusted Place with the formation of the political mind of his famous son John Stuart. In after years, when Place was preparing for death, with that deliberation and forethought which always characterized him, he packed up all the letters he had ever received from John Stuart Mill and sent them to him at Blackheath. But the messenger could not find the house. Whether he kept them, or lost them, or whether the messenger delivered them to Mrs. Chatterton, the actress whom Place married, I could never discover from any member of his family or from hers—though years ago I made many endeavours. Mr. Joseph Cowen assisting by enquiries among actors, as Professor Bain wished to see them. If they exist, they would throw more light upon the views, character, and political relations of John Stuart Mill than anything he has said or left behind him. Place was his confidant and agent—and he had no other among politicians.

When Francis Place died, Mr. Mill wrote in the *Spectator* of that day a short notice of him, covering his career in a few words—a reward in itself from Mill's pen of the singular services of Place's life. In Mr. Place's time, young insurgent politicians of any capacity went to him. He instructed them, he counselled them—I well know how wisely; in danger, he found them means of defence, and made known their peril to those who might protect them. Mr. Mill and Mr. Grote showed generous knowledge of it all.

In 1849 I had attacked the Messrs. Chambers in the *Spirii*

of the *Age*, for an article they had published, entitled, the "Reaction against Philanthropy." The vehemence with which I wrote led them to take the unusual course of replying in *Chambers's Journal*. On that occasion I received from Mr. Place the following letter, which I quote exactly as it was expressed, in Place's quaint, vigorous, candid way :—

“BROMPTON SQUARE, March 3, 1849.

“MASTER HOLYOAKE,—I have read your paper of observations on a paper written by Chambers, and dislike it very much. You assume an evil disposition in Chambers, and have laid yourself open to the same imputation. This dispute now consists of three of us, you and I and Chambers—all three of us, in vulgar parlance, being philanthropists. I have not read Chambers, but expect to find, from what you said and quoted, that he, like yourself, has been led by his feelings, and not by his understanding, and has, therefore, written a mischievous paper. I will read this paper, and decide for myself. Knowledge is not wisdom. The most conspicuous proof of this was the conduct of Lord Brougham. He knows many things—more, indeed, than most men—but is altogether incapable of combining all that relates to any one case, *i.e.*, understanding it thoroughly, and he therefore never exhausts any subject, as a man of a more enlarged understanding would do. This, too, is your case. I think I may say that not any one of your reasonings is as perfect as it ought to be, and if I were in a condition to do so, I would make this quite plain to you by carrying out your defective *notions*—reasonings, if you like the term better.

“It will, I am sure, be admitted, at least as far as your thinking can go, that neither yourself, nor Chambers, nor myself would intentionally write a word for the purpose of misleading, much less injuring, the working people ; yet your paper must, as far as it may be known to them, not only have that tendency, but a much worse one—that of depraving them, by teaching them, in their public capacity, to seek revenge, to an extent which, could it pervade the whole mass, must lead to slaughter among the human race—the beasts of prey called mankind ; for such they have ever been since they have had existence, and such as they must remain for an indefinite time, if not for ever. Their ever being anything else is with me a forlorn hope, while yet,

as I can do no better, I continue in my course of life to act as if I really had a strong hope of immense improvement for the good of all.—Yours really and truly,

“FRANCIS PLACE.”

There was value in Mr. Place's friendship. He was able to measure the minds of those with whom he came in contact, and for those for whom he cared he would do the service of showing to them the limits within which they were working. It was thus he took trouble to be useful to those who could never requite him, by putting strong, wide thoughts before them. For himself, he took no steps even to be remembered.

The meeting of two such men as the Duke of Wellington and Francis Place, of views so opposite, each distinguished in his sphere—one, the greatest military commander, the other the greatest working-class politician of his time—was a singular occurrence. It came about thus :

Political excitement ran high all over the country, and especially in London. A Tory Administration was in power, and the Premier was a soldier of overshadowing prestige who thought intimidation was the whole art of government. When dismay and hopelessness prevailed, Place took the course of waiting upon the duke, with four other working men, to represent to him the political condition of the people, and how much reform in Parliament was needed to improve their condition. It was an entirely dangerous proceeding, for the duke was not a man to approach with impunity. On arriving at Apsley House, the duke agreed to see them. When they went upstairs, they found his Grace leaning with his back against the mantelpiece. Whether the duke recognized the name of Francis Place, which would be on the paper of application for the interview, I know not, but his more familiar designation as the “Radical Tailor of Charing Cross” would not be a recommendation to the favourable reception of the duke.

When they entered the room, the duke said in his abrupt, contemptuous way, “Well! what do you want?”

Mr. Place, who was spokesman for the humble deputation, stated that agitation pervaded all classes of society, filling the country with alarm, shaking public confidence, arresting

commercial enterprise : trade was suffering, and the condition of the working class was growing more desperate every day.

The duke heard their brief story—they made it brief, knowing he was not an amiable person to delay with Radical pleas. The duke answered in his curt, unsympathetic way, “I suppose you men know that I am responsible for public order. I know how to keep it. You can go.”

Of course, they went, glad that nothing worse befel them than that abrupt dismissal. Before they were well out of the room, the duke called out, “Come back.” They returned with some trepidation, expecting the duke would order their arrest. It appeared that the duke had been impressed by their plain, manly story, and, looking at them, he said, “You seem to be men who have heads on your shoulders. Take care you keep them there.”

There was a rough sort of compliment in the duke’s imperious candour characteristic of him. The intrepid deputation bowed, the duke turned away, and they departed, not without amazement.

Two years later the Duke of Wellington was driven from power a second time. One morning when the citizens of London appeared in the streets they found placards on the walls in large letters bearing two lines only—“Stop the Duke—Go for Gold.”

How came these placards there? What printer had the temerity to print them? What stickers could be trusted with the dangerous task of setting them up, who might have been seized and imprisoned until they disclosed their employers, if indeed they escaped on those terms? Who devised that expedient of disturbing the Government of the duke? In those days of spies and militarism the scheme was dangerous alike in conception and execution. The duke never knew that the blow came from one of the deputation whom he admonished “to keep their heads upon their shoulders.” It was Francis Place who devised the scheme—which certainly he carried out.

He knew a printer in a court in Holborn who could be trusted. One Saturday afternoon when the men had left he went in to the master, examined his stock of paper, and finding it sufficient, he went out and brought in beer and food sufficient

for two days, flour, a billstickers' flat can and a brush. They then locked the doors, and he and Place worked all night and the greater part of the Sunday, Place and he pulling alternately at the hand press. They made paste, and a bag which would hold the placards concealed under a loose over-coat, and on midnight of Sunday, Place went out and put up the placards himself, sticking them up in the most convenient places he came to. At certain points, he passed his friend, the printer, who had a supply of placards, which he put quickly into Place's bag, who then went on with his bill-sticking until daylight—when they went back and distributed the type. So, when the men returned to work on Monday morning, no one but Place and the printer knew how London had been placarded.

In the excitement in which London was, this suggestive warning produced an immense impression. The public knew not whence the mysterious announcement came, and, knowing nothing, every one imagined everything. No one doubted that the warning came from influential quarters. The Bank of England was besieged, and the duke who would not have retreated before an army—retreated before Place's placards.

Debate has arisen as to whether the words of the placard were "Run for Gold" or "Go for Gold." The evidence is in favour of "Go." The competent testimony of Mr. Collet admits that Place devised the placard. On hearing Joseph Parkes read a copy of a proposed wall-bill, Place stopped him and wrote instead a placard of one line "To stop the Duke—Go for Gold." It was like Place's directness and impatience of verbiage. Mr. Collet saw one of these bills at Saville House, Leicester Square, on Saturday, May 12, 1832, which may have been one Place had procured. Mr. J. G. Harney relates that he saw a placard at St. Hiliers which bore the words, "J. Brooks, Printer, Oxford Street, London," probably a reproduction of Place's placard, as £80 was subscribed to multiply them. Mr. Brooks claimed to have been the originator of the bill. Doubleday, in his "Life of Sir Robert Peel," says, "The placard was the device of four gentlemen who each put down £20 that thousands might be printed of the terrible missives. The effect was hardly to be described. It was electric." Miss Helena Cobbett, the last surviving child of William Cobbett, writes to Mr. Harney that "Her Father in

the *Register*, vol. lxxvi. p. 392, mentioned the placard at the time of its appearance, and that her brother James had added to it a note, saying, 'The placard was suggested by Mr. John Fielden to Mr. T. Attwood, Mr. J. Parkes, and others.' " Mr. Samuel Kydd sends an extract from Alison's "History of Europe," which supplies a name for the placard which explains its efficiency. "Then were seen the *infernal* placards in the streets of London. 'To Stop the Duke—Go for Gold!' and with such success was the suggestion adopted, that in three days no less than £1,800,000 was drawn out of the Bank of England in specie" (vol. iv. p. 373). The Duke resigned his first Premiership November 16, 1830, and returned to office May 9, 1832, and resigned on the 18th. The public agitations of which the placard was but a symbol, limited the Duke's second reign to nine days.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### *FIRST PLAN OF THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS AGITATION.*

(1847-69.)

IN 1840 there were no signs of an agitation for the civil rights of women. Only a small number of women knew how few the rights of their sex were, or had any desire to increase them. The majority did not know, in any intelligent way, whether they had any civil rights at all. Women had no journal of their own. Ladies' newspapers there were, but they were edited by gentlemen. The public tongue of women was in the mouth of men. Among social reformers, Mrs. Chappell Smith, Mrs. Emma Martin, and one or two others were public advocates of social rights. Only in that quarter of society were women speakers seen upon the platform ; they were counted wilful and presuming, and it was thought that they would be better employed at home. At a later period a lady known as Mrs. Clara Lucas Balfour appeared as a lecturer on uncontested subjects before religious and literary societies. She was a lady of goodly presence, whose husband was the littlest man ever seen about the House of Commons. He had an appointment in the Private Bills office. He had fought on the *Bellerophon*, and it was put down to his sailor's daredevilism that he allowed his wife to speak in public.

Seeing how much faster political and social amendment would proceed were the quick discernment and decision of women engaged in public affairs, I often spoke of it in lectures. The fine scorn of women for delay in doing what can be done and ought to be done was much wanted in politics, where men who declare an evil to be intolerable will desist from abating it on

the appearance of the first fool who tells them "the time is not come" to act against it. Women, being one-half of society, suffered greatly by the intolerance and ignorance of men in matters which did not concern men. Still the women who well knew this, and wrote eloquently against it, had no idea of combining against it.

In 1847 I wrote in the *Free Press*, printed in the Isle of Man for the advantage of free postal circulation in England, the following passages :—

"Women have no *esprit de corps*. The language of Lord Grey, when he said, 'I shall stand by my order,' is scarcely understood by them. We have a race of women, but no order of women. . . . Reputable and intelligent women were deputed in America to attend a conference of the Peace Society in London. They crossed the Atlantic on this public mission, and when they arrived in London they were refused the privilege of sitting in the conference because they *were women*. Yet this insult was never resented.

"The police courts of the metropolis are satiated with complaints of half-murdered women against brutal husbands who escape with comparative immunity. But where are the women out of court who remonstrate? Why have they not formed a society for their own protection? Women desire a share in the suffrage. They are taxed, and therefore they claim a right to vote. But where are women's political unions—self-originated and self-sustained? If they want political rights, why do they not themselves ask for them? If it is unwomanly to ask for them, it will be unwomanly to exercise them when granted—in short, unwomanly to have them. Women, like peers, should 'stand by their order'—should have societies of their own. The impunity with which women are despoiled of property, liberty, and even of their children, at the caprice of their husbands, as some melancholy instances in our law courts have lately shown, is an imputation more powerful than any conceivable argument upon the womanly spirit of this nation. Let them take their own affairs into their own hands, as Sir Robert Peel once advised the men of this country to do.

"Let them draw up a list of their legal disabilities, and take the usual constitutional modes of obtaining redress. Let them

have societies and public meetings of their own. Let all the offices be filled by women—let the audiences be of women entirely. Let the womanly mind come into action as a separate element of reform—as a 'Fifth Estate.' It is no use to *talk* about fitness; it must be proved—the question is not one of theory, but of practice. If women have capacity for public affairs, let it be demonstrated. Familiar as women now are with literature, we have not one periodical, magazine, or newspaper conducted by women. In America the *Lowell Offering* was produced by Lowell factory-girls, but in England we have nothing of the kind. The *Lady's Newspaper* is not conducted by women. We ought to have a *Woman's Journal*—edited by women, contributed to by women, and in every sense an exponent of womanly thought and an advocate of women's rights. Hints and suggestions might be accepted from men, but no interference, no dictation, no direction. For well or ill, skilfully or unskilfully, the act should be their own in every sense."

I suggested this to several intelligent women without inducing one to follow it out. Those who saw the importance were not prepared to act upon it, and those who were able wanted the spirit of enterprise. "Propose it to Margaret Fuller," said one, when that lady was in this country. But it was not good taste to press upon an American lady a task that ought to be undertaken by an English one. I further urged that "an enterprising woman of wise will, who would undertake such a task, and would train her unpractised sisters in the art of self-emancipation, would be more of a practical benefactor than the authoress of twenty volumes in favour of their rights. When women begin to conduct their own affairs—to generate an *esprit de corps* among themselves, to discuss their own questions in public—there will be blunderings committed, weaknesses displayed, exaggerations perpetrated; but let them remember that men blundered, erred, and exaggerated times without number before they arrived at their present facility. Failure must be ventured or efficiency will never be won. Were women to attempt to legislate for men, and exclude them from their Parliament while doing it, and suffer no information of the rights or claims of men to come before them save through their wives—what an outcry there would

be from men against what they would call 'one-sided, ignorant, blundering, unjust, insolent, feminine legislation !'"

In the two articles from which the preceding passages were taken other arguments may be read, now familiar, which were then new or unfamiliar.

Previously to writing in the *Free Press* what has been cited, I spoke with Madame Belloc (then Bessie Rayner Parkes), with Madame Bodichon (then Barbara Leigh Smith), with Madame Venturi (then Mrs. Hawkes), with Miss Sophia Dobson Collet, and other ladies interested in the public action of women. Harriet Martineau was also one whom I consulted upon the subject. None thought my suggestions practicable.

There was no doubt in my mind that they would be realized. The arguments of Mary Wollstonecraft and Madame de Staél, the splendid political capacity Harriet Martineau displayed, must issue in action. In lectures and in the *Reasoner* my subject was frequently the "Civil Rights of Women." A handsome sarcophagus inkstand was given me by a committee of ladies in Glasgow in acknowledgment of these efforts. When a publisher in Fleet Street, I obtained, in 1857, through Mr. John Stuart Mill, the consent of Mrs. Mill to issue in a cheap form her famous articles, "Are Women fit for Politics? Are Politics Fit for Women?" and circulated four thousand. Until now no other edition has appeared.

It was not until ten years after the articles quoted from the *Free Press* were written, not until 1857, that women set up a journal of their own. The very name I gave—*Woman's Journal*—was adopted. Women began to edit their own papers. They have organized associations of their own now. They hold meetings of their own sex, preside over them themselves, speak from the platform, make themselves an independent power in the State, and have now come to excel men in University contests.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### *THE SON OF A POET WHO BECAME A NOTABLE JOURNALIST.*

(1850-70.)

THORNTON HUNT, the eldest son of Leigh Hunt, was, like George Henry Lewes, his friend, a fragile-looking man. Dark, slender, but compact, he had piercing eyes and a singular precision of speech—strong without being loud, and strikingly articulate. The tones were confident, as those of one who had something to say. He gave to those to whom he spoke the impression of being a well-informed, competent man, to whom it was worth while to listen. When a boy, he was with his father during his imprisonment, and was so engaging to Charles Lamb when he was a visitor to the prison that he wrote some charming verses to Thornton, as is well known. Thornton Hunt had West Indian prejudices as well as an Indian complexion. He was by instinct entirely a gentleman—fearless, true, courteous, and decided in opinion. If he entered a house as a guest, and held any opinion or rule of action which he thought it material that his host should know, he informed him thereof. Though tolerant of others where he dissented from them, he would not live under tolerance himself. Socialist, Communist, Chartist, Atheist, insurgent, regicide, were all interesting to him. He desired to know what made them what they were. He was by nature a journalist, and nothing in human life or character was above or beneath him. Human life was a necessary part of his public knowledge. Thornton Hunt's full name was Thornton Leigh Hunt, but he never used "Leigh" as part of his name, because it was so well known as

his father's Christian name. With honourable delicacy he did not wish to associate any views of his with his father's name ; nor did he wish to accept any consideration, or to bespeak any leniency of judgment, for himself as the son of a distinguished poet. Like his father, his generosity continually exceeded his means. I often dined with his family at the Broadway, Hammer-smith, where another and considerable family, left orphans by relatives, were at table, and were maintained in his house. At that time I knew that he dictated so many leading articles in a week that his earnings might have made him rich. All the time he lived most frugally, and all he gained was consumed in generous acts. Like his father, he was incapable of making provision for himself. It did not seem to occur to him. His main thought was for the misfortunes of others. No one I ever knew better illustrated Lindsay Gordon's lines—

“ Though this world be but a bubble,  
Two things stand like stone :  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in our own.”

Thornton Hunt had two passions—namely, for political freedom and social improvement—and a third, stronger than either, in favour of liberty of opinion and the right to translate it into action. He had a contempt for that philosophic opinion which led to no result. He was a subscriber to the oddest by-way Chartist funds, and found time to attend executive meetings. He was with me as one of the executive who gave the last public dinner to Feargus O'Connor at Highbury Barns on the night when O'Connor first displayed a failure of intellect.

When Thornton Hunt was consulting editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, I used to drive with him some mornings to Lord Palmerston's at Cambridge House, Piccadilly, where Mr. Hunt frequently went to learn the views which the Government wished taken in the journal he represented, to which he would give expression, maintaining his independency of judgment at the same time. He told me that “ Lord Palmerston knew nothing of human life below his carriage steps—with the world of the people on the pavement he had no familiarity. He had only a carriage knowledge of mankind.”

Mr. Cobden had refused an offer made by Lord Palmerston

of a seat in the Cabinet. Lord Palmerston was then desirous that Mr. Bright should take office, as Mr. Cobden's refusal had been said to be owing to Mr. Bright not having been asked. Afterwards Lord Palmerston told Mr. Hunt to inform me that, if he knew that Mr. Bright would be willing to take a seat, he would make a proposal to him. The understanding was that I should endeavour to ascertain what Mr. Bright's views were. Accordingly, I asked a political friend, in the habit of speaking to Mr. Bright on public affairs, to tell him that, if he were disposed under any circumstances to accept office under Lord Palmerston, he could have it. Mr. Bright, as the public knows, never was disposed.

The reasons which influenced me in being a medium of this communication I did not conceal. It did not seem to be to the public advantage that distinguished friends of the people should refuse office. It was the opinion of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright that they could do most good in opposition. Still, it seemed objectionable to blame the Government for not doing more, and yet refuse to enter the Government and attempt to do more themselves. Of course, if they had good knowledge that they would be outvoted in the Cabinet, and they nevertheless become personally responsible for its inaction, or wrong action, they would be justified in remaining in opposition. But it appeared to me the experiment ought to be tried, and, if it failed, their return to opposition would have greater weight with the country. Looking at the question from the people's point of view, it was useless to complain, as was often done, that our friends were excluded from the Government if, when they had the opportunity, they would not join it. The presence of the enemies of evil would oft prevent evil being done.

Thornton Hunt was trained by Rintoul, the founder of the *Spectator*, the most perfect weekly newspaper we ever had in England. In it all the news of the dailies was re-written and condensed—all the essential Parliamentary papers were carefully summarized. Every essential topic of the day was made clear to the reader, so that he who took the *Spectator* (which was then ninepence, and such a paper would be worth a shilling now) was well informed on all questions of news, politics, and literature. Mr. Hunt told me that on Friday Mr. Rintoul would give him a Parliamentary paper for which there was

space for two columns. It would transpire that that space was not available, and the *précis* would have to be re-written to reduce it to a column and a half. At a late hour it would be found that there was room for only one column, when the *précis* had to be reduced again—not by ellision, but by re-writing. It was Mr. Rintoul's religion to produce a perfect newspaper, and in that sense he was the most religious man of his profession. If there are newspapers in the other world, no doubt Mr. Rintoul is the first journalist there. All the ripe fruit of Mr. Hunt's training under Mr. Rintoul was seen in his programme of the *Leader* newspaper elsewhere quoted.

Mr. Hunt told me how he had once applied for a place on the staff of a journal then of rising influence. He needed no introduction to the proprietor ; his name was a letter of recommendation. When he had explained in what way he believed he could contribute to the development of the paper, the proprietor in a few words showed at once his knowledge of Mr. Hunt's character and knowledge of his own enterprise. "Mr. Hunt," said he, "what we want is not strong thinking, but strong writing." The policy, the fortunes, and success of the paper were all included in those few words. Of course the success of such a paper depends upon the sort of readers to whom it appeals.

Yet in judgment and action Mr. Hunt was sometimes entirely wrong—in my opinion in two instances. One was when Mr. Delane had, in *The Times*, charged Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright with "seeking to reduce the franchise as a step to spoliation," with a view to "seize on the estates of the proprietors of land and divide them gratuitously among the poor." This, if true, would expose them to execration and destroy them as public leaders. Mr. Cobden resented the imputation in a letter of just indignation. *The Times* refused insertion to his defence of himself and Mr. Bright. It was sent to all the daily journals. The *Daily News* and *Morning Star* alone inserted it. The *Daily Telegraph* declined to insert it, but published a leading article upon it, so much to the taste of *The Times* that Mr. Delane quoted it. Mr. Hunt wrote several letters to Mr. Cobden to the effect that they were consulting Mr. Cobden's interest by denying him the opportunity of being heard in his own defence, so far as their journal was concerned, at the same

time professing personal respect for Mr. Cobden—which was real. Mr. Cobden resented this, and said it was within their province to refuse his letter, but they should have remained neutral in a controversy where the plaintiff was not to be heard. These letters of Mr. Hunt were quite unlike his better and habitual self. It was otherwise an error to encounter a man of Cobden's vigorous sagacity with an unsubstantial plea.

To write about one's friend as though he was perfect is not to command regard for him. The perfect man is not about, and the reader, not having met with him, will be unprepared to believe in him if adduced here.

The other instance in which I thought my friend wrong was earlier than the one just given. It was at the time when the Crimean War was first in the air. The policy of the *Leader* in respect to it was discussed. Mr. Hunt's doctrine was that nations, like individuals, were sometimes the better for blood-letting, which seemed very shocking to me. I had read in Malthus and other doctrinaires of population, that society was kept down by famine, pestilence, and war, but I never before heard war deliberately advocated for that end, or that public plethora required to be relieved by bleeding. In war, the persons who are bled are the people, while the plethora is among their masters, who are never bled. This doctrine was contrary to Mr. Hunt's habitual humanity. Yet he spoke of it without remorse or misgiving as one of the ordinary principles of political wisdom. The doctrine yet prevails in newspaper quarters.

Thornton Hunt agreed with Mr. Bright (I do not) in his repugnance to direct representation of labour. I had written in *The Times* upon the political education of the working people. The following letter, written from the house in which Mr. Hunt died, refers to this:—

“ 26, EUSTON SQUARE, N.W., Feb. 12, 1871.

“ MY DEAR HOLYOAKE,—The moment I saw your splendid letter in *The Times* I wanted to write you, expressing the delight I had in reading it. And not only for its immediate subject, but for its general bearing on the real truth of progress. It makes me want to have at least a talk with you, though I often wish for more. But I have been specially baulked—by

the *perpetual* press of business on my personal attention, by the constantly increasing press of weakened health, and lately by the state of quarantine in which my house has been placed through the illness of my daughter Kathleen. She has had small-pox, but is now convalescent—after a mild attack—and in a week or two I expect to be released. I only hope this letter will not dismay you ; but she is quite isolated at the top of the house. I have not seen her. Those liable have been re-vaccinated—nearly all in the house ; two or three of us having had the malady, myself among that section. And my writing place is at the bottom of the house, in a room separate from the rest.

“I wanted especially to moot two questions to you : the hideous proposal of the ‘direct representation of labour’—a class-perpetuating notion of the worst kind ; and the Emperor Napoleon’s best ‘*Idée*’ of a periodical congress. On the last I want much to engage your mind. It is gaining very remarkable converts. As Napoleon said to me in 1864, the periodical assembling would cause many a question to be discussed and settled that now begets a congress only through quarrel, and perhaps actual war ; and, as I said to him, the records of that congress would be the very commencement of that international law which now *has no existence*, except in the Library, and there only as doctrine which may, or may not, suit the practice of nations. Internationally we still have neither more nor less than anarchy, modified by a very limited sense of decency. I have long wished that your mind turned itself to that problem.

“And I often wish that we met more. But I *will* come to you at 20, Cockspur Street, when I am out of quarantine.—Ever yours, as ever,

“THORNTON HUNT.”

This letter is quoted, as it gives a glimpse of the writer’s daily life, and an instance of the large views he entertained and the great opportunities he possessed of influencing public affairs in the direction of progress.

Thornton Hunt’s handwriting was as quaint as the old schoolmen. He wrote as the monks would write a missal. It was his taste to wear a close-fitting clerical dress, and, as his complexion was dark, he had the appearance of a Spanish

priest, as may be seen in M. Hervieu's painting of him, which aptly renders his singular expression.

His death occurred many years before it need have done. It was not unforeseen. On several occasions I visited him at Broadway when he was prostrated by the continuity of over-work. When I urged rest and travel, he would say it was impossible ; he could not give the time.

" You forget," I would say, " that there is one thing to which you will have to give time."

" What is that ? " he asked.

" Time to die. I generally observe that has to be attended to, and causes lengthened interruption in fulfilling engagements."

He did not relent or relax. You could see leading articles in his corrugated expression. So it came to pass that, while he was still in the available maturity of his mind, he was carried to Kensal Green Cemetery and laid in the grave of his father. His friend Mr. Levy Lawson and many distinguished journalists were present, and his oldest political associate, so far as I knew, Sir Eardley Wilmot, came up and talked with me of our lost friend.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### *CONCERNING LEIGH HUNT.*

(1851.)

LEIGH HUNT was a taller and statelier man than his son. Thornton one day took me to have tea with his father, who had done me the honour to wish to see me. His ample hair was grey then, but he had the same upright, bright, elastic look which all who had known him earlier knew. His easy, unaffected dignity was a welcome you never forgot.

Dickens is supposed to describe Leigh Hunt in his character of Harold Skimpole. Lord Macaulay was persuaded of this, because the name he first used was that of Leonard Horner, whose initials were the same as Leigh Hunt's. It is likely Dickens did intend at first to found the character upon Hunt's, but afterwards changed his purpose, and produced Skimpole, in whom he could better contrast heartlessness with airiness. Having changed his purpose, he changed the name. It would have been baseness as well as falseness to describe Leigh Hunt as heartless or selfish. Leigh Hunt had airiness of manner ; so had his son Thornton, and like disregard of himself. The weakness of father and son was their sympathy—their fault was their generosity. Though it sometimes involved the loss of other people's money, it first involved the total loss of their own. They were like the river which fertilises the banks through which it flows until it becomes dry in its own bed. I have known several persons who would give away the money of others, without my thinking much of them on that account, but when I found that they gave away their own in like manner, never thinking of themselves, though I might wish that their generosity was restricted to the disposal of their own funds, I had respect for them, for their unselfishness.

Leigh Hunt had consented that a young energetic Manchester gentleman, John Stores Smith (under strong Carlylean impulses, as the style of what he wrote showed), should bring out a paper bearing the title of *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, of which Leigh Hunt's part was the popular attraction. But one day there appeared some imputations on Lord John Russell. Then Leigh Hunt withdrew from the paper. Lord John, with his usual affection for literary men, had given Leigh Hunt a pension which rendered his latter days pleasant to him. Lord John might, or might not, be open to Storian censure, but I quite agreed with the poet (who conversed upon it, as it occurred at the time of my visiting him) that he could not sanction scorn appearing in a paper bearing his name, as it would appear to the public like ingratitude from one who had accepted Lord John's friendship and favour. Lord Russell was not the man to exact coincidence of opinion with him from any one he had served, but there were always sufficient persons to express disparaging censure without his friends doing it, and the public service was not likely to suffer by Leigh Hunt's silence. He would, had his convictions turned that way and the public service required it, have dissented from his illustrious friend, but intellectual dissent is a very different thing from contemptuous censure.

Lord John Russell was himself a man of great independence of spirit and even warmness of heart, which coldness of manner concealed—owing more to want of buoyancy than feeling. One day as he walked up the House of Commons his small, diminutive figure seemed in great contrast to the majestic stature of Daniel O'Connell, who was passing by him to his seat. Some one remarking it to him afterwards, the "Liberator" said, "Ah ! it is easy to see that Lord John is the son of an old man."

Mr. Ballantyne, mentioned in another chapter as connected with the *Leader*, told me that when he was editor of the *St. James's Gazette*—which was not a flourishing journal—he waited upon Lord John to solicit him to take a pecuniary interest in the fortunes of the paper, which might thereby become an influential advocate of his lordship's policy. Lord John listened to Mr. Ballantyne with frigid courtesy until he had concluded, when he rose and said : "Mr. Ballantyne, I never court the press ; I never fear the press ; I never bribe the press—I wish you good-morning."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE "LEADER" NEWSPAPER—ITS PRINCIPLES AND ITS WRITERS.

(1851–56.)

THE *Leader* newspaper excited greater hopes on its announcement, and has since its discontinuance lived longer in the memory of publicists than any other paper started in my time. Its title was not meant to be taken as egotistical in the sense of putting itself forward as a leader of journals, but as indicating that, as a journal should, the *Leader* would go in advance of the reader, spy out the unexplored regions of politics, morals, and speculation, and inform him of the pleasant places worth occupying. No journal conducted by gentlemen ever proposed, before or since, to do this in the same bold way. In one thing or other many journals are bold, but none bold in so many things, as the *Leader* undertook to be. It was Thornton Hunt who drew up the programme, which was privately circulated and never otherwise published. The following are passages from it :—

" The whole mechanical classification of the kinds usual with existing weekly journals will be cast aside for one calculated to bring out the interest of the current news. Every striking incident or class of incidents will be taken substantively.

" Every fact or point of interest connected with the subject will be diligently collected and studied. The whole will then be arranged and compressed into a neatly executed history of the affair, so as to make it the fullest, clearest, and most complete account of all printed. By this mode of treatment

giving the distinctness and simplicity of plain compilation, the papers will read with the smoothness and fulness of historical composition, the freshness and animation of an original article.

"The principle of the paper will be—the right of every opinion to its own free utterance. This principle involves a thorough recognition of *all* existing opinions and their expression in a more positive form than they have hitherto been able to obtain ; it involves also a proportionately distinct and positive statement of the opinions *entertained by the conductors of the journal*. With a principle so free, it will be necessary, in order to acquire rather than to repel influence, that this positive utterance of opinion should be executed in a skilful and decorous manner, in a generous and elevated spirit. It will proceed less by a spirit of antagonism against received opinions or parties, than by the direct development of more forcible opinions. The originators of the enterprise hold that the progress of their country and their kind is advanced by the fostering of new powers as the instruments for obtaining the fruits of opinion ; *since opinion, without social influence and political power, is a mere honorary and sterile distinction for the community among which it exists.* The endeavour will be kept up to obtain for the whole people the full exercise of the franchise and in extending education according to its lights, the new journal will constantly strive for the complete freeing of *secular education from all restraints of sect or dogmatical religion.* Again, in matter of religion every persuasion would meet with respect, and the sympathy due to conscience seen in action ; but the pure religion, which is superior to all, would animate the unceasing and strenuous endeavour for its own perfect emancipation. *Free Trade will be advocated, in order that the theoretical consummation already attained in this country shall be carried out in practice, and extended to other countries.* Political economy, however, will be treated as a science not perfected, but demanding progressive development, with the advance of general knowledge and the growing sense of social necessities."

The passages from this programme, in italics, sufficiently indicate the thoroughness and fearlessness which were afterwards characteristics of the paper. The principles of nearly all news-

papers are tempered by advertisers with a view to attract and retain them. Most journals follow public opinion—not lead it. Their boldness is limited by profitableness. It pays better to play the bagpipes in the rear than march in the vanguard. In other pursuits conscience is apt to collapse before loss, and journalism is not entirely exempt from this infirmity. The policy of the *Leader* was conscience, not consequence. The highest class of advertisements were re-written in the office where taste improved the effect. The aims of the paper were truth and originality.

In three conspicuous things in the programme cited, the *Leader* proved itself an advanced paper. In regarding political economy as imperfect and needing development, it was before John Stuart Mill, who had not then published his book of "Principles" in which he commenced this extension. It announced a policy of national and secular education, before Mr. Forster appeared in the field, with a boldness and precision to be found in no other newspaper of similar rank. It treated for the first time secular education as a distinct, concrete, self-existent thing which should be freed from all restraints of sect or dogmatical religion, in which it was before and beyond Mr. Forster. The *Leader* was for the extension and defence of free trade in land before the Cobden Club took that question in hand.

The Rev. E. R. Larken, a near relative of Lord Monson, was the chief promoter of the *Leader*, partly from his friendship for Thornton Hunt and partly from desire that a larger Christian liberalism than then existed, should have place in the press. Mr. Larken was the first clergyman who had the intrepidity to wear a beard in the pulpit. The upper and lower part of the face were shaven, but he retained his fine dark beard below the chin. Yet this limited innovation was thought to be very serious. It was regarded as indicating laxity in theological principle. Hearing him preach at his rectory on two occasions, I was very watchful, but no one by the use of a theological microscope could have discovered any departure from the tenets of the Church. George Dawson was the next minister in England who ventured to preach in a beard and with his face wholly unshaven, which brought upon him grave suspicions of latitudinarianism. Foreigners, as Orsini, Dr.

Bernard, and others wearing beards, were mostly introduced to Birmingham by the Dawson congregation. Bearded persons of that day were locally known as "Dawsonites."

Thornton Hunt was the editor, but G. H. Lewes, afterwards the husband of George Eliot, was its most brilliant and versatile writer. Herbert Spencer wrote articles in it which were the beginning of his fame. He had already become known by his work entitled "Social Statics." W. E. Forster gave his first indications in it of his interest in social questions by articles on the "Right to Labour." The chief proprietor, who spent the most money upon the paper, was a gentleman who afterwards became Examiner of Plays. He knew many languages, had many accomplishments, considerable Continental experience, and infinite vivacity both in speech and pen. I wrote papers under the signature of "Ion," partly because the name was brief, and more because I admired the character delineated by Serjeant Talfourd in his tragedy of that name. To letters I wrote under this signature, Wendell Phillips, the famous American Abolitionist orator, replied, in orations delivered in the Melodeon, Boston. He afterwards told me I was the only person in Europe to whom he ever replied.

One of the staff was Mr. W. J. Linton, the eminent wood engraver, who had other distinction both as writer and poet. He could speak well also. One night at a meeting on behalf of Italy, at the Old Crown and Anchor Tavern (then occupied by the Whittington Club, founded by Douglas Jerrold), referring to insurgents who had fallen in the cause of Italian freedom, Mr. Linton said "their fate was not to be mourned over, but to be imitated." George Dawson spoke that night, but no one said anything so heroic as this.

Another writer, a contributor to the *Reasoner*, known afterwards by excellent historic military works, though himself a civilian, was George Hooper. Thomas Ballantyne was on the staff, who had been a journalist on the side of the Manchester school, but afterwards wrote against them. He did not do this in the *Leader*. His reputation, through his change of opinion, was not to our advantage. He was an able, patient, watchful sub-editor; and was afterwards editor of the *St. James's Gazette*—a name that has since been revived.

The commissariat of the *Leader* fell to me with my other

duties, and its administration was very pleasant. In those days we only knew George Eliot as Marian Evans. She was residing then at Dr. Chapman's in the Strand, a few doors from our editorial office, which was in Wellington Street. My evening repasts were unexpected when I first introduced them, and George Eliot, who sometimes came in and joined us at table, used to call me "the Providence of the Office." Mr. Lewes, who wrote the Vivian Letters, always said something bright and graceful about "Rose." Mrs. Lewes was Rose, and she looked it, for she had a singularly bright complexion. She would sometimes join the evening repast.

The men of advanced opinions among the working class who chiefly valued the paper were not numerous enough to support it, and the middle class were not then liberal enough, nor intelligent enough, to do it to sufficient extent. In Universities and Parliament it had many subscribers. One drawback of its popularity was that it was written by writers who knew most things valued by those who knew as much as they, whereby many excellent papers were not understood by the general public. The audience thought of chiefly was the friends of writers in society, in Parliament, and the clubs. On one occasion an article was written of which the facts upon which it was based were known to only four persons in Europe—Bismarck, the Emperor Napoleon, Lord John Russell, and Thornton Hunt—and what was said was only comprehensible by them. Once I put the servant's bonnet on the handle of the office broom and placed it before Thornton (we always spoke of Mr. Hunt as Thornton) when he was writing, suggesting that he should make his arguments intelligible to that average young person in effigy. It was an illusion to suppose that you had to write down to the capacity of others. What was required was that a writer should make himself intelligible to persons entirely unfamiliar with the question. A master in science is always simple and clear. A master in rhetoric can always make his highest meaning plain to the lowest listener. A dainty meal need not be adulterated to render it eatable by the multitude.

I had had colleagues in other circles who considered it was a service to wealthy persons to afford them costly opportunities of promoting public progress, and would encourage their enthusiasm manifested that way. I was of a different way of

thinking ; I thought it right to make it quite clear what losses might arise. To this end I made similar tables for the *Leader* that I previously made for the *Spirit of the Age*, so that the proprietors were acquainted every week with the fluctuations or loss in their enterprise.

When the *Leader* had been published several years I went one morning to breakfast with the chief proprietor, who then lodged in Southampton Row, and asked him whether he would tell me what his motive was in continuing the paper. "Some men," I said, "spent their money on horses, or wine, or women ; the motive of that was intelligible—but why did he go on paying £41 a week for writing the *Leader* without prospect of its return ? If I knew his motive, it would save me concern." Excepting the desire to establish a high class advanced paper, he had no motive. Thereupon I proposed that my salary should be reduced one half, and that the same reductions should be recommended to all other contributors—for the longer a paper was able to exist the greater would be its reputation and chance of its becoming a property. My advice was acted upon. It was not likely to conduce to my popularity in the office ; but it was approved by the chief writers, and I never observed that it made any difference in their relations with me for having given it.

Subsequently, when the *Leader* came to an end, it was taken by Mr. Edward Whitty, who was a Roman Catholic, and sentiments appeared in it which made its friends wish that it had ceased to exist earlier. Mr. Whitty prolonged its existence, but for a short period. He was the son of the editor of the *Liverpool Post*. His sister was a famous opera singer. He first came into repute himself by writing for the *Leader* remarkable letters from the House of Commons, entitled, "A Stranger in Parliament," in which he introduced for the first time the phrase, "the governing classes," which afterwards entered political literature. He died on his way to Australia.

The first time my name ever appeared among public writers of repute was on the handsomely printed list of contributors to the *Leader*. The paper was intended to be fearless, and my name was thought to be a necessary proof of it, as the paper appealed to the boldness of thought of the time. I was against my name being advertised, as it might bring loss to the paper, my rule

being to aid, but never to hamper, an insurgent cause. My name probably cost the *Leader* £1,000 or more. Professor Maurice took alarm, and he alarmed Professor Charles Kingsley, who was not easy to alarm. There were other disquieting names in our list of writers, but mine was then thought the one most foreboding of innovation, as I was regarded as an atheist and republican. How far, or in what sense this was true, ecclesiastical persons never inquired then. What they inferred from my name were to them as facts.

The Rev. Mr. Maurice's son, in his biography of his father, represented Kingsley as telling Mr. Maurice that the publication of his name on the list of the contributors to the *Leader* was "an impudent attempt to involve him in opinions which he utterly disclaimed and hated." It is difficult to imagine Kingsley saying this—since he knew to the contrary. His name was only published once as one among persons "who *had* contributed to the *Leader*." We only knew Kingsley as an earnest and manly Christian who, differing from us on some questions, did not shrink from attacking us in our own columns. His only contribution was a letter of assault. No orthodox newspaper would have permitted us to attack its cardinal views in its own columns. We not only permitted Kingsley to do this, but honoured him for it. Of thirty names we gave, only five were "involved" in the opinion of the *Leader*. The others were men and women of mark, whom we had allowed to contribute expositions of their views, irrespective of any coincidence with the programme of the *Leader*. The conductors of the paper were men of scrupulous honour, and far too proud to admit Mr. Kingsley to write if he had given any hint that he regarded it as "an impudent attempt to involve him in opinions which he utterly disclaimed."

The Rev. Dr. Jelf had laid down the following fine ecclesiastical syllogism to the Rev. Mr. Maurice:—"Mr. Maurice is identified with Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Kingsley is identified with Mr. Holyoake—Mr. Holyoake is identified with Tom Paine."

Had I spoken of Dr. Richard Jelf as Dick Jelf, it would be rightly counted vulgar offensiveness—to speak of Thomas Paine as "Tom Paine" was not less so. Paine was a passionate theist, which should exempt him from clerical disrespect. He inspired the American nation with a spirit of independence, which made

it free, and that is more than all the Jelfs that ever were have done. It happens that I was more opposed to Paine's principles than Dr. Jelf, but the antagonists of the *Leader* were not often particular in facts or courtesy.

After the *Leader* had been issued for some months, and the public could judge how far it fulfilled its professions, the following words were used on the only announcement in which Mr. Kingsley's name appeared :—

“England is said to be governed by Opinion. To endow that Power with its fullest action the *Leader* offers a systematic utterance for *perfect freedom of opinion in politics, religion, literature, science, and art.*

“For the struggling nationalities abroad it offers a frank voice among the English people. In its columns, devoted weekly to European Democracy, it gives an *official* exposition of the opinions and acts of the great leaders of the European Democratic party, in a form of such authenticity as will enable the public to correct the misrepresentations of the adverse journals of the day. The *Leader* seeks to develop the *utmost* freedom of intellect, energy of production, popular power, and in the political and social relation of all classes the paramount interest of natural affection.”

With all the advance of opinion, the *Leader* has had no successor in range, thoroughness, and courage.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF GEORGE HENRY LEWES.*

(1851.)

GEORGE HENRY LEWES was intellectually the bravest man I have known. It was not that he was without the wisdom which looks around to see what the consequences of any act would be ; but where a thing seemed right in itself he ignored the consequences of doing it. He did not dare the consequences ; he did not recognize them. They were to him as though they were not. When he accepted a principle, he accepted all that belonged to it. Courage means facing a danger by force of will, facing danger which you know to be such. Men of natural intrepidity never take danger into account, or, if they are conscious of it, it only influences them as an inspiration of action. Mr. Lewes had intellectual intrepidity of this kind. This was my experience and impression of his character which I gave George Eliot at the time of his death.

Most persons regard toleration as a reluctant necessity ; others regard it as an unpleasant duty which they nevertheless have to discharge, and they apologise for their concession by diminishing the credibility of those they condescend to recognize, by pointing out—as even W. J. Fox did in one instance—that anti-Theistic belief is due to some mental deficiency. Lewes did nothing of the kind. He regarded toleration as a right of others. It was he who proposed that my name should appear on the published list of contributors to the *Leader* newspaper, which was attended with polemical consequences that the reader has seen recounted.

Mr. Lewes, like Mr. Herbert Spencer, wrote a charming

book, and did not appear to know it, and afterwards superseded it by a work which never interested the same readers. Mr. Spencer published "Social Statics," which interested readers wherever the English language was intelligible ; and this he superseded by "Principles of Sociology," which was only intelligible to a limited class of advanced thinkers. About the same time, Mr. Lewes wrote a "Biography of Philosophy," in four shilling volumes, for Charles Knight, and presented me with the set, in which he inscribed his name. The book fascinated all students who were beginning to turn their attention to philosophy. To this day, all who possess the original volumes value them highly. Mr. Lewes afterwards reproduced the work, with all the erudite illustrations and authorities with which he was so familiar. It is valued by scholars, but is beyond the appreciation of the far larger class whom he had first interested, instructed, and inspired.

Lewes had few rivals as a conversationalist. But he told me he found one once. He was invited by W. J. Fox to meet, at his house, Margaret Fuller, afterwards Countess Ossoli. Carlyle was another guest that night. Fox, Carlyle, and Lewes were famous talkers ; but when Margaret Fuller took her turn they were all silenced, and—their turn came no more.

When in America I met with an interesting instance of the regard in which Mr. Lewes's writings were held by back-woodsmen, who told me they had read them by camp fires at night—books which were then far from popular in England.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### *PERTURBATION IN WHITEHAVEN.*

(1851.)

THE writer does not forget that the reader can take little interest in episodes of controversial turbulence (these not being uncommon) except as illustrating the manners of the period. Milton says that "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than War." But they *are* less renowned, and in most cases not renowned at all. The battles for opinion, however, have some popular interest when they take a fighting form. Robert Owen, the most mild, abstract-speaking, gracious-mannered unaggressive propagandist who ever appeared, was often met by outrage in his time. He, nevertheless, by having declared "all the religions of the world" to be wrong, did not reserve for himself a friend in any church. He excited all against him ; and, nothing loath, they went as far in rebuking their philosophical adversary as the popular idea of Christian charity—not much restraining in those days—would warrant.

Shortly before I went to Worcester as a lecturer on Owen's views, he was encountered at a public meeting by the then Dr. Retford,<sup>1</sup> who before a large audience made a gesture of outrage at Mr. Owen undescribable here. Mr. Owen, being a philanthropist who had spent life and fortune in the service of the people, did not mitigate anger at his intellectual errors which were attempted to be confuted in this unpleasant way. Dr. Retford's energetic behaviour was the talk of every citizen in Worcester when I was there, many of whom had witnessed the act. The doctor had a son who became art critic of the *Daily News*, and was a man of tolerant and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. George Retford, Congregationalist minister.

gentlemanly manners. The preceding incident is merely mentioned as an illustration of the theological ways of a cathedral city when I entered the field of controversy. It is in a cathedral city, with its divine advantages, that you expect the perfect thing in Christianity—but civility is not always one of them.

When mischief was intended to me personally it never came to much. My protection was often my voice. Had I been capable of speaking in strident and imperious tones, my opinions would have been counted highly objectionable. Believing with Leigh Hunt that “the errors of men proceeded more from defect of knowledge than defect of goodness,” it seemed the best course to explain the reasons for any new opinion. Thus some listened from curiosity, and those who were not interested were not irritated.

In 1851, in consequence of a magisterial decision in Whitehaven, I volunteered to go down there and speak upon it. Mr. James Hughan, a Unitarian street-lecturer, speaking at the Bulwark on the harmless subject of “Progression,” was knocked down by one Charles Flinn, who had been twice before convicted of assaults ; but on this occasion, the Rev. F. W. Wicks being on the bench, Flinn was dismissed and Mr. Hughan censured as having “incited” the man by his address. The reputation of others who had been before me, rather than my own, caused me to be regarded with hostility. A Social Missionary who believed in sensationalism had issued a placard, giving the inhabitants the unwelcome intimation that “The Devil and Socialism were in the town.” It was not necessary to do this, as the clergy had suggested to the people that the two creatures went about together. All the lecturer had in view was to dispute the existence of that disagreeable personage, and to explain that, if indeed he *was* about, the Social System of Robert Owen was disconnected from him. The lecturer’s irritating announcement had a meritorious motive. Since the attack of the Bishop of Exeter, which caused even in Birmingham the resignation of the Registrar, the clergy had been an intimidating force in every town, and many alarmed and prudent persons had denied their opinions or explained them away in self-protection. Therefore, open, even ostentatious, defiance had merit, and some justification

from the point of view of self-respect. It had, however, rendered the town angry and resentful. Unfortunately Mr. Lennon—a courageous sea-rover, an abstainer from alcohol (rare in seaport men then), and well respected for intelligence and character—who had made arrangements for my visit—broke a blood vessel a week before my arrival. The animosity shown to him living was not mitigated by his death, and the burial service was refused over his remains. The religious riots which my predecessors had occasioned were censured by Sir James Graham, who always had the fairness and boldness to rebuke intolerance.

It had not, however, subsided when I entered the town and my friends showed, in their countenances and speech dismal apprehensions. That there was some unusual dread in the air was evident from the fact that the women shared it. Hitherto I had found them, under circumstances of danger, to be the last to utter words of discouragement, but here they helped to diffuse the panic. This led me to avoid the houses of friends whom I should otherwise have visited lest I compromised them. The Irish population were dreaded, and their prejudices were known to be above the reach of reason, and the population of Lord Lonsdale's collieries were no less causes of alarm. It was in vain that I urged that the charges of admission should be raised, which would keep out the more dangerous disturbers. The answer was they would force the door. "If they do," I said, "they cannot reach the stage to interrupt the lecture." "They say they will come armed with stones, and throw at the speaker, and chairman, and whoever is on the stage," was the unpleasant assurance given me. Thinking that so much ingenuity ought not to lack appropriate exercise, I arranged to be my own chairman, and to exclude the committee from the stage, so that, the objects to be thrown at being reduced to one, it might be more to the credit of the mob if they hit it. The proprietor of the theatre sent word that there would be a disturbance, and he demanded payment for both nights before we occupied the place. Some religious Whitehaven men, who were friendly to me personally, had told me in Newcastle-on-Tyne that I should not be heard in their town, and it would be no use going there. When there, appearances looked very much like it.

On the day of the lecture a man went into the shop of a respectable tradesman in Whitehaven, and said, "the theatre would be pulled down that night." The serjeant of police had been heard saying that "there would be blood and slaughter in the theatre, and he should order his men to keep out of the way, as they were not going to get their heads broken." A friend of mine, whom I asked to call at the Police Office with a request that two policemen should be at the door, received a more assuring answer. The superintendent said he would be on that beat and would pass the theatre every five minutes, and look in as often as his duty allowed.

As my engagement was to lecture, I was precluded from feeling apprehension until afterwards. I had long seen that there never could be a quarrel unless there were two parties to it—not even on the platform—and *I* was not going to be one. Experience showed me that men of the rudest nature seldom break out into outrage at once; they act on, indeed often wait for, some pretext or provocation, and if this is not afforded they are confused and do nothing. Anyhow it was most foolish to go about telling every one that an attack was expected; since, if it did not occur, we should be in a manner bound to get up one ourselves, to prevent public disappointment.

One incident occurred which seems ludicrous now, but was lawful then. At that time white hats were in fashion, and a friend in Newcastle had given me one of white silk. The newest gloss of unworn brightness was upon it, and my itinerant wardrobe fortunately included a new coat. In this attire I walked out to inspect the foe. In practice we know divinity doth hedge a gentleman as well as a king, and there was reason to think that appearances might find a response where principle would find none. So it transpired. The local mob made way for me, and those who would have knocked me down had I worn a "seedy" aspect, stepped involuntarily out of the way. Many did not suspect me of being the invading lecturer, and those who did, finding me respectable, surmised I might have friends, and it might not be so safe as they thought to assault me.

When the hour of the lecture came, I was at the theatre, saw to the lights, and that the door was manned by groups of able-bodied friends, placed as much out of sight as possible,

that no provocation might occur. Others diffused themselves over the theatre where Christians were thickest, holding themselves ready either to listen to the lecture or restrain an attack, if a party issued from near them. Wherever two or three militant Christians were gathered together, there was a sentinel in the midst of them. The precautions we took would have been superfluous in orthodox persons, who, having mansions in the skies, see in death but an agreeable change of residence ; but to others, no less hopeful, but not so certain as to a celestial manor house, manslaughter amounts to apprehensive disinheriance, and therefore they decline that casualty when obtruded upon them prematurely. Certainly I did not want to fight the people of Whitehaven. I went to reason with them. It was not part of my taste to die in Whitehaven. Besides, if a man is to be killed in an irregular way, he ought to be indulged in his choice of the place and the selection of his own executioner.

The first lecture was well received. The audience included ladies ; the gallery was filled, the pit moderately, and the boxes were just inhabited. The *Whitehaven Herald* gave a very fair report of my address, which disarmed the prejudice of the intelligent part of the town. My subject was, "The Moral Innocency of Speculative Opinion, even the most extreme, when conscientiously entertained, setting forth how far a man might dissent from the Religious Opinions of his Neighbours, and yet hope to live in Truth and die in Peace." The latter part had reference to the death of Lennon. My expectations were verified as to the audience. They were astonished at not being outraged, and they saw that a speaker might promote conviction without putting the "Devil" on his placard. My argument was one they could not fight and did not answer. All the discussion amounted to was a few feeble speeches, and a few reluctant admissions. The trick was tried of asking me whether "I believed the Bible to be the revealed will of God !" "Whether I believed in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." I answered that they should know my opinions on those subjects quickly enough, should I have an opportunity of speaking upon them in Whitehaven. For the present, while I was obliged by the expression of their curiosity, I must confine myself to the subject on the placard, or the

public would complain that under the pretext of speaking on one subject I had introduced others. It might gratify me and them to talk about anything else, but there was something higher than gratification, and that was good faith ; and, as nothing more had to be said on the proper topic of the night, I, thanking them for their attention, closed the meeting, when the speeches of debate had occupied us perhaps three-quarters of an hour.

On the second night our fortifications were the same. It had, however, become known that the police were not likely to interfere. Some persons appeared at the door inciting the people to riot, and, as there were three clergymen on the magistrates' bench, the police could calculate on their sanction of the violation of duty. The new audience were turbulent. Mr. Stuart Potter, a Wesleyan local preacher, was very noisy until some one stopped his mouth by laying a heavy hand upon it. A grey-headed adversary in front of the gallery threw his arms about as though his intention was to throw stones. Like a steam arm, his appeared to move independently of the will of the owner, and had a suspicious activity. Two persons walked on to the stage to enjoy the advantage of closer intercourse with me, but, suspecting the enjoyment might not be mutual, I refused to answer any questions until they resumed their places below. Another man clambered on the stage who seemed to meditate some personal attention to me. I assured him I was sensible of the consideration he showed me by the trouble he was taking to come to me, but I preferred to conduct the meeting without assistance.

Thus ended the adventure in Whitehaven. I left the town next day under the impression that the "beasts of Ephesus" had propagated their species.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### *THE VICAR OF FLEET STREET.*

(1852.)

WHEN a publisher in Fleet Street, a demand was made upon me for tithes. When the demand was first made, it astounded me. I, who once proposed to walk ninety miles to see the Rev. George Harris, because of his great sermon against the Rathcormac massacre—I, who, then dreading the Unitarian faith, yet honoured the Unitarian minister whose eloquent denunciations made tithes hateful for ever—I pay tithes? Well, the tithes on “147” were £2 8s. or £2 10s. a-year, or more. The first quarter was 12s. 8d. As I entered at the half-quarter, half was the affair of Mr. Carvalho, my predecessor. He, though a Jew, paid tithes. I was bound to fulfil my agreement as to taxes with Mr. Carvalho, and I paid the 12s. 8d., which I regarded as so much blood-money after what I had read of the manner of their collection in Ireland. In due time I was served with a tithe notice on my own account. I said, “What I might do when I was forced to do something I could not tell, but no tithe should I pay until forced, and not then if I could help it.”

A gentleman was sent to me to explain that the parish of St. Bride, or the City, had sold the tithe to Sir Edward Somebody’s ancestors two centuries ago, and that certain civil advantage accrued to Fleet Street in consequence, and I was merely paying for *that*. I answered that “neither City nor parish had sold my conscience; and if they had sold the tithe, why did he come collecting it?”

Clergymen in debate upon the French Revolution had frequently shown how Atheists attempted spoliation of church property. If that were so, was it less discreditable, I asked,

than the Church in the plenitude of its power, in the affluence of its wealth, in days of peace, unprovoked by any antagonism, unincited by any want, descending upon a house in Fleet Street and carrying away the property of an "atheist."

Whether my representations were faithfully reported to the Vicar of Fleet Street, I had no means of knowing. He made me no visit, and I was too busy to call upon him. No instance was known to me in which any demand for tithes was ever mitigated by argument or remonstrance. A notice was sent me that unless the tithe claim was paid on demand there would be a distress. The demand was not paid, and a seizure of goods took place. The officers had some difficulty in making a selection of what to seize. The books in my shop were heretical, or philosophical with an heretical tendency, and the Church had some misgiving as to the seemliness of becoming salesmen at an auction of works of a very unclerical character. Their agents, therefore, went roaming about the house in search of something better to their taste. One year they took my clock. In the printing office they found another time some reams of blank paper, which they thought they could sell with a clear conscience. They had a conscience, such as it was, about the propriety of selling heterodox publications, but no conscience as to the propriety of taking my property as a penalty on my convictions. Whether the proceeds of the sale exceeded, as it ought to have done, the demands made against me, no surplus was returned to me. Some years three or four times the value of the rate was taken.

Satisfied with the result of their raids, they continued to come again. As the paper seized the year before was found in the printing office—my brother Austin's department—he said reasonably he would not have them there again, as they had no right to seize things in his office for a claim against me. Nor did I feel like wishing to pay again for what they might seize another year. I therefore resolved to meet this ecclesiastical demand in a proper ecclesiastical manner, which I hoped would be agreeable to the vicar. When notice of another distress came, I told the officer "I should pay this year, and send the amount to the vicar." The vicar, on hearing this, no doubt regarded it as a sign of wholesome repentance on the part of his refractory parishioner.

In due course I wrote to the vicar stating that, as it was proper to tender tithes "in kind," as editor and publisher of the *Reasoner* I forwarded him three volumes of that work—they being the "kind" of property produced on my farm. Three volumes likely to interest his reverence were chosen. The "trade price" of them was more than the demand. The vicar was therefore asked for a receipt "in full" for that year's tithes. The vicar did not find it lawful or seemly to refuse this mode of payment; whether he was gratified by it I never heard. He sent me no receipt and no demand for the payment of tithes any more. I consoled myself for the virtual act of payment by the hope that I might have accomplished an act of salutary propagandism, as, for all I knew, the vicar might present the books to the vestry library.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### *THE COWPER STREET DEBATE—FIGURES ON THE PLATFORM.*

(1853.)

No truth can be fully trusted until it has been fully discussed in fair and equal contention. Milton thought truth was never worsted in a “free and open encounter.” But debate may be “free” and not fair. It may be “open,” and yet one-sided if the disputants have unequal advantages. For want of all-round watchfulness in these respects truth has often been put down within my experience. In the Cowper Street debate the conditions were equal, excepting, perhaps, that my adversary was provided with an income, and I had to earn one otherwise, during the six weeks the discussion lasted.

As the report of what took place appeared in a half-crown volume, of which forty-five thousand were sold ; as purchasers still survive, and copies exist in public libraries, a description of the affair will be relevant here. The debate took place in 1853, which will soon be forty years since ; thus the subject may have novelty if not interest to this generation.

The Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, was the promoter of this discussion. In the *Reasoner*, which I edited, a new form of Freethought had been originated, to which the name of “Secularism” was given. Some took this to be a new name for an old thing, whereas it was a new name for a new conception. Many had shown that morality resting on theology was not universally accepted. We maintained that morality

resting on material and social facts was a force among all people. We were the first who taught that the secular was sacred. This was the new conception to which the new name was given.

This form of opinion accepted the ethical precepts of Christianity, so far as they were consonant with the welfare of society. The word secular was taken as George Combe defined it—as implying “those issues which can be tested by the experience of this life.” This doctrine of conduct is now widely accepted by Christian preachers as being good—so far as it goes. It was not approved then, and a Dissenting preacher, one Rev. Brewin Grant, of fine disputative faculty, was sent out on a “three years’ mission” to arrest the dissemination of the new principles. The rev. gentleman had manifest courage, pertinacity, and ceaseless fertility in objection, but the scrupulousness which commands respect was not so conspicuous. In earlier years there was a Socialist Society in Leicester, and Mr. Grant, then a youth in a hosiery warehouse, used to make smart speeches after the lectures—as discussion was always encouraged by the social reformers, who held that truth was best elicited by comparison of ideas. The vivacity of the youthful disputant brought him into notice, and the elders of the Congregational Church thought they saw in him the making of a defender of the faith. He was sent to college by them, and the alertness in controversy he manifested led to his being sent out on the aforesaid “mission.”

The Rev. Dr. Ackworth, of Bradford, had challenged me to a “foot-to-foot encounter,” which I afterwards engaged in. It was determined that a debate in London should have precedence. It was to the credit of Mr. Grant’s manliness that he was willing to enter the lists in London, where what he took to be error was mainly promulgated, and that he was willing to meet the advocate who was held to be the originator of the new heresy in a six nights’ discussion on six successive Thursday evenings, from January 20 to February 24, 1853.

Mr. Grant could have no misgiving in meeting me. The apprehension ought to have been all on my side, for he had informed the public that he had “silenced” Cardinal Newman. Conceive Brewin Grant silencing Cardinal Newman, who crushed Professor Kingsley between two sentences! The

Cardinal was then known as John Henry Newman. When he delivered his famous lectures to the Oratorians of St. Philip Neri, Mr. Grant announced that he had compelled him "to take down his flag and reduce his lectures from twelve to nine." It does not appear that Dr. Newman ever took the slightest notice of Mr. Grant, but this did not concern him whose contentment with himself was immeasurable, and who mistook the Cardinal's contempt for terror.

Mr. Grant's discussion with me was held in the Cowper Street School rooms. His committee was the Rev. Dr. Campbell, editor of the *British Banner*; Rev. Robert Ashton, Samuel Morley, S. Priestly, and J. S. Crisp. My committee was James Watson, Richard Moore, my brother Austin, and the Rev. Ebenezer Syme. Mr. Samuel Morley acted as chairman for Mr. Grant, the Rev. E. Syme was chairman for me, and the Rev. Howard Hinton was umpire.

The Rev. Howard Hinton, the umpire, was a distinguished Congregational preacher, who looked upon Christianity with the eye of a philosopher, as well as that of a believer. He was in Congregational divinity what Sir Benjamin Brodie was in medicine—dispassionate and many-sided in his knowledge. His son, James Hinton, became eminent both as an aurist and a thinker. His work on the "Mystery of Pain" is still in the minds of men. Some years after the debate I had the pleasure to meet him at dinner, at the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke's, when I was impressed by his searching power of thought, as others had been. As I walked with him to his door that night, he referred to his father's admission made in one of his discourses upon the discussion—that some of my arguments were entitled to consideration, naming one where I pointed out that the evangelical doctrine of motives was a pathless wilderness. It was this: First, a young inquirer is told to observe moral duties; then he is told he cannot do that, or anything good, unless God first disposes him; then that whatever good works he performs will be of no avail unless he also believes; then that he cannot believe unless God gives him grace to believe; then that God will not give him this grace of belief unless he asks Him; and then that he cannot ask Him effectually unless he already has the grace of faith, which is the very thing he has to ask for.

Mr. Grant's chairman was, as I have said, Mr. Samuel Morley, who became the great leader of the Nonconformist party. He was a man of truth and fairness first, and a Christian afterwards. He would have ascribed these high qualities to his Christianity, but as they were conspicuous in him, in a degree beyond that of his co-religionists, I judged them to be inherent. Some years afterwards he sent me £5 through his secretary, the Rev. Mr. Price, to assist in procuring a law of Secular Affirmation, as the Christian oath was then obligatory as a condition of legal justice—which justice was refused to all who had conscientious scruples as to solemnly professing a faith they did not hold. In acknowledging the subscription in the *Reasoner*, I omitted the name of the giver, as I had reason to know it would subject him to the necessity of explanation and misconception.

A valued friend of mine, who was a student in the Congregational College supported by Mr. Morley, acquired other convictions, and accepted an appointment in a rural Unitarian Church, which afforded but a slender salary. Mr. Morley, knowing that he had done this for conscience' sake, sent him a cheque for £100, although it must have deeply pained Mr. Morley that a Congregational College student should become a Unitarian preacher. There were other instances known to me in which Mr. Morley generously assisted political and social movements, although he knew that those engaged in them differed widely from himself. He seemed to think that progress by reason was compatible with Christianity, although its incentive was purely secular.

As an employer, he had regard to the welfare of his workmen, as they often told me ; and his manufactures, known for their genuineness, exalted the character of British industry. While other philanthropists whom I have known, having the honourable ambition of usefulness, would reserve their wealth to make one splendid gift that would bring them renown, and let hundreds perish in their day, whose lives they could have cheered and extended—Mr. Morley, by countless acts of unostentatious kindness, diffused happiness among the living, less fortunate than himself, who could never requite him, nor would the world ever know of the service he rendered them. This form of kindness always seems higher to me than any form of

monumental benevolence to posterity, which commands larger public admiration. He who is the friend of his contemporaries may, on entering another world, expect to meet many who will accord him grateful welcome, while he who has given thought only for those who may live after him, will meet no one who knows him. Those who have had no regard for the born nor the unborn, neither gods nor men will have any interest in knowing ; and those who have lived only for themselves may rightly be left to perish by themselves.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell, editor of the *British Banner*, became friendly to me until his death, and his son was equally so after him ; so that the discussion has many pleasant memories to me. Mr. J. S. Crisp, connected with Ward and Co., the publishers, showed impartiality and judgment in seeing the debate through the press, and each month for nine months I and Mr. Grant received £5 each on every one thousand of the debate printed. We each received £45 altogether.

The Rev. Ebenezer Syme, my chairman, was at that time assistant to Dr. John Chapman and sub-editor of the *Westminster Review*. He was the brother of the Rev. Alexander Syme, of Nottingham, also a Congregational minister, with whom I had debated with instruction to myself, and for whom I conceived regard.

In the debate Mr. Grant professed that I had commended works from which he had rather not read passages. I demanded that he should do it. He would not, but called upon me to do it ; whereupon the Rev. E. Syme, my chairman, rose and promptly undertook to read every passage Mr. Grant wished provided he would read an equal number of passages from the Old Testament which Mr. Syme would select. This relevant and decisive offer was not accepted. It made a lasting impression on the great assembly, and thus that episode ended. It was an instance of Mr. Grant's ingenuity to urge that I should read his illustrations, whereby the time of my speech would be entirely taken up in presenting his case instead of my own.

The general subject was—"What advantages would accrue to mankind generally, and the working class in particular, by the removal of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism in its place ?" The pretentious and misleading words "the removal of Christianity" were my adversary's invention. Five

years before, I had elsewhere insisted that our object was to contest the *error*, not the *truth*, which was included in Christianity ; whereas to remove it all would be to remove the good as well as the evil. But at no time could we induce adversaries (not even one so amiable as the Rev. H. Townley) to discuss our propositions as we expressed them ; and we had to accept their wording (which was always against us) or forego the advantage of debate. Mr. Morley, with his usual frankness, admitted that I had, in committee, objected to the interpolated words. In the discussion I refused to accept the sweeping responsibility. What I maintained was the secular principle that duties of this life which we know should take precedence over those of another which we do not know ; that in human affairs science is the providence of man, that morality rests upon foundations purely human ; that escape from the penalties of sin by the death of another is not good in principle nor in example ; and that where Scriptural precepts appear to conflict, guidance can only come by selection.

In the debate I spoke of my early pastor, the Rev. John Angell James, with a respect due to one who was for many years the minister of my mother, and because of the way in which he had spoken of me, at a time when one less generous might have used disparaging words. Mr. Grant, conceding nothing to this sentiment, charged me with inconsistency in the expression of it. He construed courtesy into an offence. On the other hand the Rev. Thomas Binney wrote to me to assure me that he thought my expressions of regard for my former pastor creditable to me. Mr. Binney, himself a Newcastle-on-Tyne man, was one of the figures of the platform. He wrote afterwards a notable little book entitled "How to Make the Best of Both Worlds." He was the first preacher in my time who admitted and enforced the secular side of New Testament teaching. He had natural vigour of expression, boldness, and humour. He had the true genius of the preacher ; he was inspired by his subject and his audience. I once heard him make a remarkable speech in the Town Hall, Birmingham. Many wanted him to publish it, but he answered it was impossible. He said he did not foresee what he should say, and could never recall what he had said. I think he was like Sojourner Truth, the famous negress preacher

of America, who said what she spoke the Lord put into her mouth at the time, and she did not know before she began what it would be. She said the audience went to hear her, and she came to hear herself, that she might know what the Lord had to say to her.

My reverend opponent conducted his part of the discussion entirely to his own satisfaction. It was one of the endowments of Mr. Grant to be always satisfied with himself. He had advantage over me in his rapidity of speech. He boasted that he should talk three times as fast as I should, and so have three times more pages in the report, not reflecting that his velocity rendered it beyond the power of the hearer to follow him. He was the nimblest opponent I ever met, but he never bit your arguments ; he only nibbled at them. He was rabbit-minded, with a scavenger's eye for the refuse of old theological controversy. With him epithets were arguments. I was made answerable for whatever could be found in any book I had reviewed favourably, and for every sentiment expressed by writers and correspondents in fourteen volumes of the *Reasoner* I had edited ! "There was nothing meaner than a mask, and nothing viler than the purpose for which we wore it," was one thing he said in terms of polished force, but his general epithets were below the level of street-corner coarseness. Regarding personal invective as a digression in argument, I did not reciprocate this language. Had I imitated my adversary's epithets, it would have been ascribed to the viciousness of my principles ; while his invective would be counted as "holy wrath" in him. Observation of conflicts and controversy had taught me that he who strikes the first blow begins a fight, because a blow oft obliges another in self-defence. It is the second person in a dispute who begins a quarrel. Not even a lunatic can keep up a dispute with himself. He who, in discussion, explains his case and does not retort, makes a quarrel impossible, and his adversary who seeks it appears a disorderly person. This, in the end, Mr. Grant came to appear in the eyes of his friends.

I had contended that there were two Christs in the New Testament—Christ the Gentle and Christ the Austere. Had Mr. Grant given the audience the right of choice, he would have made converts where he made none. Unless the spirit of

the present is breathed into the letter of the past, stagnation petrifies the minds of men. As Lord Houghton wrote—

“ So, while the world rolls on from change to change,  
And realms of thought expand,  
The letter stands without expanse or range,  
Stiff as a dead man's hand.”

Yet it ought to be owned that the theologian is honest under the fetter of infallible Scripture, when he refuses to depart from the letter. To drop the “letter” is to drop the doctrine. To “expand” the letter is to change it. New “range” means new thought which, in this insidious way, is put forward to supersede the old. The frank thing is to say so, and admit that the “letter” is obsolete—is gone—is disproved and that new views which are truer constitute the new letter of progress. The best thing to do with the “dead hand” is to bury it. To try to expand dissolution and life is tying the dead to the living.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### *THE DISSENTING CHAMPION WHO DESERTED HIS SUPPORTERS.*

(1854-1869.)

SOME readers of the *Newcastle Chronicle* asked for the sequel to the Cowper Street debate. The story is brief. The Congregationalist leaders who promoted Mr. Grant's Three Years' Mission did not extend the term of his services. Some said and more thought that his mode of controversy was not calculated to win adherents to the cause he represented.

Afterwards the Nonconformist body beheld a transformation scene none could have expected. Their champion deserted them and their cause, and wrote a book against them entitled "The Dissenting World," which the *Athenæum* (October 16, 1869) described as "overflowing with spite, vanity, insolence, and coarse derision." So I was not alone in considering him a minister of peculiar ways. His book made it plain to his friends that unjust epithets imply an unjust spirit. He afterwards obtained admission into the Church of England. It was said of the late Dr. Adler, the great Rabbi, that when an importunate Jew threatened to go and be converted if his wishes were not complied with, the Rabbi offered to pay for a cab that he might arrive at the place of conversion speedily, before he changed his mind. Mr. Grant's colleagues were quite as willing to expedite his transference to the Church. I will, however, do him the justice to say that he had one merit, rare in an adversary of that day: he would at times quote fully and fairly what you said. But when he came to put his interpretation upon it, you did not know it again. His powers of seeing things unexpressed

and unimplied would have entitled him to a gold medal, if such honour were provided for such attainments. When the preliminaries of the Cowper Street debate were being arranged, he asked me to meet him, which I declined to do. As he had described me as one not to be trusted on my word, an interview seemed useless. If I was what he asserted, he could not be interested in my company, and, if he believed what he had said, I could not be interested in his.

A year or so later I was invited by the Rev. Dr. Rutherford to breakfast at his house. To my surprise Mr. Grant appeared at table. In the course of conversation with Mr. Grant, I said, "he had precluded himself from friendly intercourse, unless he felt justified in retracting publicly what he had said publicly." I added, "Were I to apply to you the epithets you apply to me, discussion would be a bear garden of invective." He at once rejoined, "I wish you would," which showed his good judgment. Had I, representing infantine and unfriended opinions against full-grown popular orthodoxy, descended to his level, I should have been lost.

In 1854 I joined in a further discussion with Mr. Grant for six nights in the City Hall, Glasgow. Friends of mine in that city had invited the Rev. Dr. Win. Anderson, affectionately called "Willie Anderson" by the people. Vigorous in speech and wilful in opinion, he had taken the side of Garibaldi, Kossuth, and Mazzini on the platform. In after years pleasant words from him came to me through Mr. Logan, a city missionary, whom I first knew at Bradford; but in 1854 Dr. Anderson had no friendly opinion of me, thought Mr. Grant good enough to meet me, and advised his being sent for, and thus the Glasgow discussion with him came about.

An attempt was made to get me to discuss Reign of Terror questions in which atrocity was attributed to me in the terms of the propositions. This I declined, preferring, as fairer and more instructive, a form of question which implied the comparative reasonableness of our opposing opinions. On one night during the discussion I received a telegram that my wife was attacked by cholera in London. Had I left Glasgow to visit her, Mr. Grant would have represented me as running away, and that he had silenced me, as he said he had Cardinal Newman, who had never exchanged a word with him. One night

for half an hour I showed how my opponent's cause might be made to appear did I pursue the same course toward him as he pursued towards us. His friends were very uneasy. That method which they applauded when applied to me did not seem so interesting when applied to themselves. Mr. Southwell and other friends of mine loudly applauded this half hour's retaliation, but I went no further. It was sufficient to show that it was possible to meet Mr. Grant on his own ground and in his own way. But when the way is a bad way, it is not profitable to truth to walk therein. Discussion is brought into distrust and contempt when it is seen to be a struggle to overthrow an adversary instead of to overthrow error.

Enough has been said, perhaps more than enough, of the epithets Mr. Grant employed in the London and Glasgow debates. A list of them which I had prepared is omitted, as they are not edifying, and they failed in effect, even in Scotland, where theologians used to keep a large variety on hand. Mr. John Brown, of the *Citizen*, whom I did not then know, pointed out that they did not answer their purpose, and that strangers to the disputants in the City Hall took me to be the Christian and Mr. Grant to be the other person. But there is no profit in dwelling upon controversial imputation except on the Irish principle—"that the only way to prevent what is past is to stop it before it happens."

## CHAPTER L.

### *ADVENTURES WHERE ADVENTURES ARE NOT COUNTED POSSIBLE.*

(1854-1884.)

FEW persons think that there are adventures in controversy as well as on sea or land. To be murderously assailed in the dark by one who mistakes you for some one else passes for an adventure by common consent. But, in controversy by pen or speech, a man may be mistaken as to what he means and be assassinated in open day. An attack upon character may be more serious than an attack upon life, but is accounted little noteworthy.

It has been said, with the frequency of a proverb, that the lives of literary-minded men are distinguished by few adventures. That is because only one kind of adventures is thought of ; yet there are intellectual adventures as strange, as dramatic, and as full of fatalities as those of the physical kind.

How many family feuds and party feuds have arisen from a single saying, perhaps spoken in anger, in most cases never intended to be understood in the sense it was taken. Yet incurable animosity has come of it, and a vendetta which has lasted for years through the lives of a family or the duration of a party. The fortunes of a Cabinet, the reputation of a minister, the fate of a dynasty have sometimes turned on a phrase creating inextinguishable resentments. Carlton has suggested the danger of words in notable lines :—

“ Boys flying kites haul in their white winged birds,  
You can’t do that way when you’re flying words—  
Careful with fire is good advice we know :  
Careful with words is ten times doubly so.

Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead,  
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."

Very gradually I found this out.

As a social missionary, I was often called upon to give names to infants before the congregation in our lecture halls. Sometimes foolish names were proposed ; sometimes I was responsible for them.

Wanting a name for writing purposes that did not suggest my own, I selected "Landor Praed." Landor I took because the brief, vigorous, clear style of Landor were useful to me to bear in mind. Using Landor as a Christian name would not, I thought, strike any one as an affectation of his qualities. For a surname Praed seemed convenient, being brief and obscure. I took it from a Paddington omnibus which ran to "Praed Street," a street I had never been in and thought little known. After a while I found there was a banker of that name in Fleet Street, and, what was worse, there was a Winthrop Mackworth Praed whom more people knew than knew Praed Street, and some thought his name intentionally chosen.

Afterwards I observed that Mr. Washington Wilks, some time editor of the *Morning Star*, was disparaged, in respect of qualities he really possessed, because his sphere of activity did not enable him to sustain the portentous pretension of the name of "Washington." But graver misadventures befel me.

In 1852 a proposal was made for a shilling subscription in aid of European freedom, to be placed at the discretionary disposal of Kossuth and Mazzini on behalf of Hungary and Italy. Viscount Goode rich, Thornton Hunt, Douglas Jerrold, Professor Newman, and James Stansfeld were on the committee, on which my name also appeared. I published in the *Reasoner* the manifesto relating thereto, and did all I could to give effect to it. By aid of the personality of Mazzini it was evident that money could be had. Therefore I asked him to write me a letter. He did so, and I soon collected one thousand shillings, then another thousand, and so on until nine thousand were sent to me. Correspondence, acknowledgment and transmission of the money was done by me at the cost of a  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. to the fund. My brother Austin, with his usual ardour, took a great share of the labour this involved. We had the pleasure of remitting to the great triumvir £450.

There was one, however (W. J. Linton), as desirous as myself to see the subscription succeed, who became my enemy because I did not effect the collection in his name—which was not possible.

The same writer addressed a letter to the *Star of Freedom* saying that “our friend ‘Ion’ who writes in the *Leader*, has accepted the office of touter in ordinary to the ‘Walmsley Incapables,’ and serves them from time to time with his most careful emssculations, from the once free-speaking ‘Ion,’ to the foolishest, tiredest Chartist, who means only to ‘take what he can get,’ on ‘Ion’s’ recommendation.”

I was the subject also of an epigram from the same pen which represented me as once deserving the name of *Iron* from the unyieldingness of my arguments; but now the *r* was well dropped out in “Ion” since I had become flaccid and nerveless.

Among the many who have from time to time done me the service of being my friends, I must often have created confusion and even distrust in their regard by acts the effects of which were unforeseen and which I went on committing when I did see the effect. Among every man’s friends there are some who are less discerning than others, and judge by impression or pre-possession, without looking at the facts of the case. For instance, when I spoke in favour of Lord Elcho at St. Martin’s Hall meeting, it seemed to many that I was more influenced by the pleasure of so appearing than by honesty of opinion. Lord Elcho in 1852 had said things in the House of Commons from which I, as well as my colleagues of the National Reform League, dissented; but at the same time he volunteered to attend an indignation meeting convened by us, to listen to what had to be said against him, and reply face to face. I thought this manly then, and I think so still. He acknowledged the right of the working class to judge his conduct, and in meeting them to defend what he said he paid them a tribute which contradicted his apparent estimate of them, and atoned in some measure for his wrong judgment of them. At the same time he had supported in the House a proposal for an Intelligence Franchise in favour of which I had written public letters to Lord John Russell.

At the same meeting Professor Beesley declared—amid the foolish applause of the meeting—that he would not go across

Long Acre, in which street the hall stood, to vote in behalf of any Reform Bill, if it did not include the social improvement of the working classes. I was in favour of a Reform Bill without any conditions, because it was better to have political reform if you could get it, without social reform, than to postpone political reform until you could have them both together. Professor Beesley's doctrine would delay political redress until some scheme of social redress was agreed upon (which at that time was not formulated), whereas enfranchisement would place in the hands of the people a powerful and constitutional instrument for forcing social redress to the front, when the people clearly understood what they wanted. My being in favour of obtaining what we could get exposed me to the accusation of being unfriendly to entire enfranchisement, of which I was more in favour than Professor Beesley, who, being a Comtist, was against the people having political power.

My willingness to accept an Intelligence Franchise arose from seeing that it would admit at once the most advanced artizans to the electorate, where they could help those below them to enfranchisement. It was not in my mind to accept this limited measure in lieu of the general right of voting, but as an aid to it. If a million could be added to the number of electors, it was treachery to them to prevent their enfranchisement because the larger number could not be included. Lord Elcho, being in favour of an intelligence Franchise, was so far, in my opinion, a friend of the working-class politicians ; and when he appealed to me to say what I thought upon his conduct, it would have been cowardice not to maintain there the principle I had maintained elsewhere. At the same time I said it was strange that Lord Elcho, who had founded the Volunteer force, should give workmen muskets and refuse them votes.

In reply to those at the meeting who represented me as opposed to manhood suffrage, I said that I went further than they, for I had always been an advocate of womanhood suffrage. But this did not help me with my assailants. They regarded me as "throwing in the apple of discord." Thus the civil rights of women was then regarded as an "apple of discord" among Radicals.

At the time of Mr. Foote's imprisonment (1883) for some

heterodox proceeding, Dr. Aveling wrote to me to sign a petition "humbly praying mercy" for Mr. Foote. As this was contrary to English traditions of Freethought, it was not in my way to sign it, unless the person for whom "mercy" was asked wanted it. Then my signature was at his command, as I never made my sense of pride or duty the rule of another. When I was imprisoned, I should have treated him as my worst enemy who put upon me the outrage of asking for "mercy" in my name, without my knowledge or consent. Such a petition implies the renunciation of doing the same thing again. It was to assume Mr. Foote to be a coward without our knowing it, and to act upon the ignominious assumption. In any other way, on ground of injustice, needlessness, or excessiveness of the sentence, I would sign any petition, and said so. Yet Mr. M. D. Conway went to a public meeting at St. James's Hall, and described me, amid outcries, as the only person who would not sign a petition on Mr. Foote's behalf. Mr. Conway, not being an Englishman, might know nothing of the traditions of Freethought among us, and therefore could not be expected to share our sense of freethinking honour, which might be mistaken, but stood up for what it took to be truth—never explained itself away, and never supplicated for mercy.

Nevertheless I addressed the following letter to Sir William Vernon Harcourt, then Home Secretary :—

"SIR,—Two prisoners, Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey, are undergoing excessive sentences. Permit me to give reasons why they should be released. A Freethinker who believes what he is doing to be right, never ceases to do it, equally as his adversaries do. I therefore ask for justice, not 'mercy.' I take Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey's method of advocacy to be a principle with them, and therefore I think that their sentences should be terminated as a matter of justice. Blasphemy is the sin of all sects, but only punished in the weakest. There is, however, one thing more repulsive than blasphemy, and that is outrage. I do not pretend that outrage is either undefinable or unpunishable under impartial law. Outrage, as they who commit it know full well, is when any one imputes to others a conscious infamy of belief which they do not hold, and intends to shock, or

irritate, or affront them, regardless whether it pains them or not. This is outrage, and, in the interests of society and good-feeling, should be discouraged. Yet this outrage is constantly committed by Christian preachers and writers against Freethinkers, and the law never steps in to protect them. Since, therefore, the law does not deem it its duty to defend the few against the many, it is not needful or seemly that it should be employed to defend the many against the few. Outrage may be committed in excitement or under provocation, and is then an error rather than a crime ; while outrage, as a method of argument, whether employed by the few or the many, is a polecat policy, which induces every self-regarding person to keep clear of the 'cause' which adopts it, whether it be Freethought or Christianity. Therefore, in a civilized community, intellectual outrage may be left to its own consequences, and needs not that the law should decrease them by sentences which, by exciting public sympathy, obscure the intrinsic hatefulness of the offence. Since the country regards you as a Home Secretary who would not do wrong under intimidation, nor be deterred from doing right by unreflecting prejudice, I venture to submit these considerations to you."

At a later date, when the Queen's Jubilee occurred, I accepted an invitation of Major Dickson, M.P., to be present at the Crystal Palace when the working-class representatives were to send an address to the Queen. In my speech, as reported in *The Times* (June 27, 1887), I said Her Majesty's father, the Duke of Kent, was like his father, George III., before him, a promoter of co-operative self-help. The Prince Consort was a subscriber of £50 a year to a band to play in an East End park on Sundays, so that poor workpeople should have music once a week. The Prince of Wales had, with not less kindness, countenanced and encouraged social progress among the people. The Queen, therefore, was entitled to congratulations on her Jubilee, for these things had not come to pass had she disapproved them.

The *Echo* thought it strange that "I, of all men in London, was celebrating (at the Crystal Palace) the virtues of Prince Albert and the Queen, and thereby magnifying the Crown." My reply to the *Echo* was that these Royal personages I had

named had shown interest in the co-operative and social improvement of the people, and this I acknowledged. I do not see how we can expect these services from those more fortunately placed than ourselves, if we show no appreciation of them. If my enemy did me a friendly thing, I should acknowledge it, though I should combat him, nevertheless, when I thought his acts pernicious. I expressly said, in the remarks I made at the Crystal Palace, "that the power of the Crown is greater than is generally known," and it was because great power had been left to it, and no serious attempt made to diminish it, that the Crown is able, if it chooses, not only to retard, but prevent social progress in various ways. Because it has not done so, but, on the other hand, assisted social freedom, I think a fair ground of Jubilee congratulations had been established. Many things have been done tending to increase the enjoyment of the people, at the instigation of the Prince of Wales, which might not have been done had the Queen disapproved it.

It is not an advantage to be represented as changed in your political convictions, when they remain the same, such imputed change being ascribed to feebleness of intellect or abandonment of principle—to decay of mind or decay of honour—and all because you are just in acknowledgment of the services of others, queens or opponents. It is a maxim in England to "give the devil his due." But England is the only country in which he gets it, as a rule ; but the maxim failed in my case.

No faculty I have has given me more pleasure than laughing at the absurdities of things I like. Let him beware who exercises the faculty. He will have adventures raining upon him. Only he who looks all round the field of propagandism ever sees over which fence the bull is coming. But if he gives warning he will have his own friends rush at him. This has oft befallen me in temperance quarters, but not where Sir Wilfrid Lawson had rule. Once I said, "One of the most insipid, unattractive, underivable, meaningless words which ever stood as the badge of a party is the term "Teetotalism." It neither means total water nor total Souchong. It is weak, alike in sound and sense. But, viewed in the light of the men it has rescued from ruin, it is one of the fairest, brightest, sunniest, sweetest words that ever gladdened eye or ear ; every syllable is illumined and

radiant with social deliverance. But it is often belied, dimmed, and distorted by incapacity and antagonism."

This went for nothing with the *Alliance News*, which long treated me as an enemy of temperance. Because I suggested that a term which endangered the efficiency of an advocacy be changed, it was interpreted among those who were wedded to a term, and were incapable of seeing its consequences, that I objected to the advocacy itself. The term "Teetotal," which never had any meaning, originated in the old Lord Derby's Cockpit in Lancaster. It became afterwards a favourite place of meeting. I myself lectured in it. When Joseph Livesey began to advocate abstinence from intoxicating drinks, an illiterate but honest man, who was first to agree to abstain, explained that he was a total abstainer. But, having an incurable stutter in his speech, he said he was a "t-t-t-total abstainer." Livesey, who did not know what name to call his new adherents by, at once exclaimed, "That is the name we will take—tee-tee-totalers!" This was contracted into tee-totaler. So the ludicrous but useful name came to be adopted.

A term which is good in itself becomes after a time like a coin—battered and defaced by reckless ill-conditioned persons using it—and ought to be sent to the mint of worn-out phrases, a new one being issued.

My dislike to see a good cause made to look absurd brought me many enemies when I advised a change would be an improvement. It was not, as many thought, from egotism or vanity that I did so, but because it seemed to me of more importance that our friends should be in the right than that our adversaries should. Any one who looks no further than into the pamphlet literature of movements with which I was connected from 1840 to 1880, will find abundant evidence that there are adventures ludicrous and sometimes tragical connected with the use of words.

## CHAPTER LI.

### *THE TROUBLE WITH QUEEN ANNE.*

(1854-5.)

THE freedom of the press dates from 1693, when the Commons struck out by a special vote the list of temporary acts against the press which were intended to be continued. But restriction upon its liberty by taxation was the persistent device of the governing classes, who were terrified at the apparition of the wilful little printing-press.

The Free Press Terror lasted 142 years. "Twenty years of resolute government" Lord Salisbury thought sufficient to extinguish the spirit of freedom in Ireland. The press was subjected to "resolute restriction" nearly a century and a half, yet it burst its bonds after all. A free press was never a terror to the people—it was their hope. It was the governing classes who were under alarm. The "terror" began and ended in the reign of two women—Queen Anne (the only queen whose death is always treated as absolute) and Queen Victoria. The Anne Tax commenced in 1712 ; it ceased with Victoria in 1855. The second lady was better than the first, for Victoria repealed what Anne imposed. The press is a spy upon authority and sells its observations to the public. It makes known new ideas before it knows who will be affected by them, and often after it does know. Princes and priests soon saw an enemy in the press. Type was in their opinion the most serious form lead could take. They therefore hit on the compulsory stamp to restrain the issue of papers, which put money into the Crown's purse and limited news. It robbed the reader by making him pay exorbitantly for his paper, and kept the poorer classes

ignorant. Anne put a halfpenny tax on a little sheet and a penny on a larger one. George II., whom Landor says "was always reckoned vile," added a halfpenny to the impost. George III., who was no better, added another halfpenny. A second time he added a halfpenny, and, finding the larceny of the press profitable, he increased the tax three halfpence, raising the stamp to fourpence. I speak of monarchs doing this. By constitutional jugglery it is contrived that no Minister shall be responsible for injustice. The monarch is exonerated under the pretence that Parliament made the law. All the while the people had no control over the House of Commons. When the king set himself against a good measure, it required the menace of a revolution to pass it. He who could resist good was answerable for evil which he permitted. Thus the rich classes—otherwise the conspiring classes—of the State shut out, as far as they could, all knowledge of their doings, alleging that their object was to prevent the dissemination of "heresy and immorality," thus proclaiming their interest in virtue while concealing their political and ecclesiastical vices.

Nothing reminded the world so long and so disagreeably of the existence of Queen Anne as the 10th Act of her malevolent reign. From 1712 to 1855 she was the pestilent troubler of the press. George III. mitigated in one respect, but intensified in another, her pernicious initiative. The Queen Anne Stamp was put not only on every paper "containing news intended to be made public," but on essays not political, as any one may see who looks at Sir Richard Steele's *Spectator* in the Library of the British Museum. Sir Richard's harmless paper was killed by the red ban of Queen Anne. The 60th George III. extended the stamp to "pamphlets containing remarks on any matter in Church or State published at intervals not exceeding twenty-six days, and sold at less than 6d." George III. further ordained that publishers of a newspaper must, under penalty of £20, enter into a bond of £400 or £300, together with sureties, in case the paper contained a blasphemous or seditious libel—every editor being assumed to be a criminally disposed person and naturally inclined to blasphemy and sedition. Every person possessing a printing-press or types for printing, and every type-founder was ordered to give notice to the Clerk

of the Peace. Every person selling type was ordered to give an account of all persons to whom they were sold. Every person who printed anything also had to keep a copy of the matter printed, and write on it the name and abode of the person who employed him to print it. The printer was treated as an enemy of the State, and compelled to become an informer.

The most popular part of the contest against the taxes centred in the repeal of the newspaper stamp. Until the time of the Reform Bill of 1832, there was little objection to the stamp by Englishmen in general ; they rather thought it an inevitable arrangement. The *Atlas*, edited by Mr. H. J. Slack, which had the suggestive intrepidity of Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, said "the Englishman was a stamped animal : he was tattooed all over. There was not a single spot of his body corporate that was not stamped several times. He could not move without knocking his head against a stamp, and before he could arrive at any station of respectability he must have paid more money for stamps than would have set him up for life. The stamp penetrates everywhere ; it seizes upon all things, and fixes its claws wherever there is a tangible substance. Sometimes, indeed, it flies to the intangible, and quarters itself upon the air, the imagination of man, his avocations, his insanity, his hopes and prospects, his pleasures and his pains, and does not scruple to fasten upon his affections. Even love is stamped. A man cannot fall in love and marry a lady without an acknowledgment of the omnipotence of the stamp. An Englishman is born to be stamped : he lives in a state of stamp, and is stamped while he is dying, and after he is dead."

When Lord John Russell introduced the Parliamentary Reform Bill in 1831, the stamp on English newspapers was fourpence. The ordinary price of a newspaper was sevenpence. The interest excited by the Reform Bill created a great demand for newspapers among thousands to whom sevenpence was a prohibitive price. This demand was supplied by publishing newspapers without a stamp in defiance of the law. Some persons did this to make a living by supplying a want. Others were actuated by indignation at the restriction of political knowledge. These ran great risks and suffered serious penalties. Among them no one was more distinguished than Henry Hetherington, who published several unstamped news-

papers with news in every column. But the paper on which he set his heart was the *Poor Man's Guardian*, price one penny. This was exactly the kind of paper the suppression of which was intended by the 10th of Anne and the 60th of George III. The *Guardian's* method of obtaining redress of grievance was to call for Universal Suffrage. It advocated passive resistance to oppressive laws, and was against violence. But it constantly discussed "every matter in Church and State." It gave no bond to the Stamp Office against "blasphemy and sedition," and it paid no stamp duty. More than five hundred persons were prosecuted for selling it, and Mr. Hetherington suffered two imprisonments of six months each for publishing it. He was hunted by the police for years, having to conceal himself, and enter his place of business in successive disguises. His shop goods were carried off, and blacksmiths were brought in to destroy his presses and type.

After three years' persecution, on 17th June, 1834, the *Poor Man's Guardian* was brought before the Court of Exchequer. Henry Hetherington was at the same time sued for publishing the *People's Conservative*, a paper at a higher price, which contained a considerable amount of miscellaneous news. Mr. Hetherington defended himself in person in a speech interesting, argumentative and resolute. He said the "odious 60th George III. was the work of the notorious Lord Castlereagh, who afterwards cut his throat at North Cray, Kent." Under the Castlereagh Act, he said, it was unlawful to print the Bible in numbers with any comment thereon. The Solicitor-General contended that the *Guardian* and *Conservative* were clearly newspapers, as the jury would, on inspecting them, see. He said little, as convictions followed with mechanical celerity. Lord Lyndhurst said less, but to more purport—namely, that "the *Poor Man's Guardian* was a much more *meagre* publication than the *Conservative*, but the jury could inspect them, and they knew as much about a newspaper as he did."

They did, and their verdict was against the *Conservative*, with two penalties, £100 for not delivering the affidavit, and £20 for selling them unstamped, while their verdict upon the *Poor Man's Guardian* was in favour of Mr. Hetherington, who at once exclaimed—"I am glad of that, for it legalizes the publication." Lord Lyndhurst then said—"Mr. Hetherington

is anxious that it should be understood that the jury do not think the *Poor Man's Guardian* comes within the Act." [See report of trial in the acquitted *Guardian* of June 21st, 1834.] Thus Lord Lyndhurst volunteered to explain to the jury the purport of Mr. Hetherington's jubilant exclamation. What could be the intention of the Tory Radical Chief Baron in practically legalising the *Guardian*, for publishing which five hundred persons had been imprisoned, it is difficult to conjecture. He must have intended to terminate the disreputable prosecutions continued by the Government, for he knew that the "meagreness" of the publication was its offence. The 60th George III. was designed by Castlereagh to restrain papers "published in great numbers, and at *very small prices*." "Meagreness" was an aggravation rather than an alleviation of the crime. Lord Lyndhurst knew that the 60th of George III. left standing the Act 10th Queen Anne, which Act declared that "every printed paper containing news to be dispersed and made public must bear a stamp." He treated this act as though it was "as dead as Queen Anne" herself. All the while it had an infamous existence on the Statute Book. He, however, in suggesting to the jury that a "meagre" publication was exempted shows that a judge can, when he pleases, annul an Act and virtually create a new law.

The Inland Revenue Board must have been mad, after obtaining five hundred convictions under the Act, to be baffled and condemned, and, as Mr. Collet wrote, the Board "indignantly left the Government and the Constitution of these realms as well as our holy religion to take care of themselves evermore" as far as "meagre" papers could trouble them. They had still the power of action, for they had the 10th of Queen Anne to go upon, and afterwards they did put it in force on outside instigation. Of course it was the duty of the Revenue Board to protect those publishers who did pay the duty against the rivalry of those who did not. But when public sentiment was against the tax, it became odious to enforce it.

Mr. Alderman Abel Heywood of Manchester, who was one of the imprisoned, recently stated at a City meeting, when the honorary Freedom was conferred upon him, that all told in town and country the number imprisoned was 750.

## CHAPTER LII.

### *THE TWELVE YEARS AGITATION AGAINST THE 10TH OF QUEEN ANNE.*

(1854-5.)

IN 1836 the stamp duty was reduced to a penny. This put an end to the competition of the unstamped newspaper, but it did not put an end to unstamped publications. Papers not "meagre" began to appear as rivals to the stamped press. Among the most eminent violators of the 10th of Anne were afterwards the *Athenaeum*, the *Builder*, and the *Penny Magazine*. The most defiant violators of the 60th George III. were subsequently the *Reasoner* and the *National Reformer*.

Our free press has two histories. The right of the free publication of opinion goes back to the days of Milton's splendid advocacy of "Unlicensed Printing," and Jeremy Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying," and comes down to the days of Richard Carlile, Watson, Hetherington, and others. We are not concerned here with the penalties of opinion, but with the taxes which impeded its expression, though a history of the twelve years' agitation against these taxes would be an interesting political story of modern times.

By the Reform Bill of 1832, the government of the country was consigned to what W. J. Fox called the "Worshipful Company of Ten Pound Householders," who sent representatives to Parliament who had the merit of thinking it was time that the dead hand of Queen Anne should be taken off the press. On March 7, 1849, an association was formed "to obtain the exemption of the press from all taxation and from all control except that of a court of law." Francis Place was treasurer; James

Watson, sub-treasurer. Richard Moore, who was afterwards chairman, C. D. Collet, secretary, and others, were members of the committee, which in 1850 was increased by James Stansfeld, George Dawson, and myself. In 1851, Mr. Milner Gibson, M.P., became president, and J. Alfred Novello sub-treasurer. The committee was increased by the names of Dr. Black, John Bright, M.P., R. Cobden, M.P., Passmore Edwards, Herbert Spencer, Joseph Hume, M.P., John Cassell, Thornton Hunt, Professor T. H. Key, Rev. E. R. Larken, George Henry Lewes, William Scholefield, M.P., and others.

These persons had no interest to serve, and only resentment to encounter, in the part they took. It was generous and disinterested indignation at the injustice and insolence of law that brought them into the field. The first Lord Shaftesbury wrote—"I know nothing greater or nobler than the undertaking and managing some important accusation by which some high criminal of State, or some formed body of conspirators against the public, may be arraigned and brought to punishment, through the honest zeal and *public affection* of a private man." "Public affection"—a happy phrase, well describes the sentiment that animated the committee.

The Taxes on Knowledge in 1848 consisted of duties of the following kind, producing in round numbers—

On foreign books .....	£ 7,647
On advertisements.....	153,017
On paper .....	745,795
The penny stamp .....	360,273

At that time (1848) sixty millions of newspapers were transmitted by post. The cost of this transmission and the manufacture of stamps, taken at £150,000, would leave a net revenue from taxes on knowledge of upwards of one million.

It was entirely an uphill enterprize to undertake the abolition of these long established, fiercely defended, profitable imposts on ideas. Time and artifice had disguised them from the people most affected by them. Canning accused the people of "an ignorant impatience of taxation." He might more reasonably have accused them of ignorant acquiescence in it. Editors of newspapers, fearing competition, were mostly against the repeal of the stamp. Paper makers were against the

repeal of the duty on paper, which, being paid in advance, kept small funded competitors out of the field. Even the advertisement duty had its defenders, as it kept rival tradesmen from appealing to the general public. Yet, within twelve years of incessant and intelligent agitation, all these taxes were swept away by a committee which never had an average income of £300 a year.

Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden were the great supporters of the question in Parliament. The leader of the repeal there was Mr. Milner Gibson. Never had a leader more celebrated supporters. Never had supporters a more intrepid and ingenious leader. Mr. Gibson was a young Tory squire when he became member for Ipswich, which seat he lost through becoming convinced of the common sense of Free Trade. He was elected member for Manchester, and his fine abilities enriched Liberalism. He was tall, handsome, with a pleasant, winning expression, and a singular softness and persuasiveness of speech. There was, as the *Daily News* said, "a sparkle in his brisk talk and light comedy manner," and adversaries were oblivious of the rapier in his argument until they felt the point. The contrast of a country gentleman of debonnaire manners being the cordial colleague of manufacturers and Puritan politicians, was a theme of comment. Mr. Gibson was a dexterous debater, master of the methods of Parliament, and excelled in drawing up a resolution which the largest number of those objecting to it would be compelled to vote for.

Next to Mr. Milner Gibson, the success of the movement with means so limited, was owing to Mr. Collet Dobson Collet, whose energy, resource and devices were like Cleopatra's charms, of infinite variety. At every meeting of the committee he had twenty schemes of action to lay before them, from which Bright and Cobden and Gibson would select the most practical, and the most mischievous to the enemy.<sup>1</sup> A good secretary, who has enterprise together with deference to the opinion of those respon-

<sup>1</sup> "It would be unjust of him not to mention the services of their secretary, Mr. Collet. His friend Mr. Cobden had said to him a short time since, 'I wonder what Collet will turn his hand to next?' He hoped he would undertake something, for it would be a pity if such wonderful tact, good-nature, zeal and intelligence were not always employed in the service of his country."—*John Bright, M.P., Speech at Exeter Hall, at meeting for Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, February, 1855.*

sible, is master of the movement in which he is engaged. He at once serves and instructs without offending the self-respect, or alienating the members by action without their knowledge and consent. The courageous policy of the committee (founded on that of Henry Hetherington) was to destroy obnoxious laws by compelling the Government to enforce them impartially. Odious enactments are maintained by permitting powerful offenders to escape and applying them to poorer offenders, who have no means of resistance or retaliation.

By the same policy the Sunday Society might have repealed in less than twelve years the infamous act of Bishop Porteous, against which they have been for more than thirty years vainly supplicating.

In the chapter on the "Personal Characteristics of Mr. Bright," mention is made of Mr. Peter Borthwick's meeting at the City of London Tavern, called to form a separate society for repealing the paper duty. As a Tory, Mr. Borthwick was against the diffusion of political information amongst the "masses"—a civil substitute (about that time invented) for the term "mob." The policy of the *Morning Post* was to put the question of the paper duty into other hands, which would have diverted public attention and destroyed the unity of the demand for the complete emancipation of the press. When the amendment was carried which I proposed, the Borthwick scheme was heard of no more. The terms in which *The Times* mentioned my speech were of advantage to me. The next day Francis Place spoke of it to me, saying, in the generous way he had of encouraging young men, that I might become a useful advocate. This I remember, as it was the first time I had received approval from him, for, though he freely gave counsel, he seldom gave praise.

As *Punch*, the *Athenæum*, the *Builder*, and *Dickens's Household Narrative of Current Events* all contained news weekly, and were not required to be stamped, the attention of Mr. Timm, of the Inland Revenue, was called to these cases. When he intimidated small country publishers by threatening them with prosecution, he was asked why he assailed publishers whom prosecution would ruin, and left unmolested rich offenders who could well defend themselves. Mr. Timm's answers were never satisfactory. Thereupon further letters

would be sent, pointing out the deficiency of his answers, and a member of Parliament, often Mr. Gibson, would ask for explanation in the House. This worried the Inland Revenue Board, and Mr. Timm would seek repose by not replying to letters. Then questions were again put in Parliament asking why he was silent when the public interest required information from him, which made Mr. Timm's life not worth living. Mr. John Wood, the chairman of the Inland Board of Revenue, said this paltry stamp tax, which only brought in about £500,000 a year, gave them more trouble than all the rest of the revenue put together, including the income-tax. The committee exerted themselves to increase that trouble, and John Stuart Mill afterwards said that "the committee converted the department," which can only be done by compelling the administrators to apply their Acts to rich as well as to poor.

Charles Dickens published the *Household Narrative of Current Events* without a stamp, unaware that the 10th of Queen Anne was not, like its mistress, dead, but only sleeping. The committee promoted a prosecution, which soon suspended that publication—at a loss to him, it was said, of £4,000 a year. Two of the three judges, before whom the case came, decided against Queen Anne, and in favour of Mr. Dickens. Baron Parke dissented. The Attorney-General (afterwards Lord Chief Justice Cockburn) agreed with Baron Parke that the decision was against the law; but it helped the agitation greatly.

The Inland Revenue Board had sleepless nights through our demand that they should define what was "news." It was not in them to do it. They could give no unassailable answer. Disraeli came to their assistance, as the reader will see further on, but failed to give them relief. When the Dickens trial came on, the cry in the newspaper offices was—"What the Dickens *is* news?"

## CHAPTER LIII.

### *THE "HOLY WAR" OF THE UNSTAMPED PRESS.*

(1854.)

EVERY reader of Bunyan knows how the town of Mansoul was taken in the "Holy War." The taking of Somerset House by the forces of the No-Stamp Agitators was, if less memorable, not less "Holy," for it was the war against political and religious ignorance.

The first Parliamentary triumph against these taxes was on April 14, 1853, when Mr. Milner Gibson carried a resolution for the total repeal of the advertisement duty, in which he was supported by the vote of Mr. Disraeli. Four days later Mr. Gladstone brought in his Budget, which proposed to reduce the duty from 1s. 6d. to 6d. The resolution that Mr. Gibson carried pledged the House against the tax, but did not repeal it. When Mr. Gladstone brought in the Bill to fix the duty at 6d., Mr. Gibson moved its total repeal, but he was beaten by 116 votes in favour of the 6d., only 106 voting against it. The Government, having performed their duty, went to the clubs or the opera, and left the House to its divisions on the details in committee. It was moved that there be a duty of 6d., when Mr. E. J. Craufurd, M.P. for the Ayr Burghs, who was always at hand in late divisions, moved an amendment that in the Bill the figure 6 should be omitted and 0 substituted. The House divided, when it proved that there were 77 votes in favour of 0, and only 68 in favour of 6: majority for 0—9. So the House determined that there should be an advertisement duty of no pounds, no shillings, no pence, no farthings. "Is this correct?" asked Mr. Gibson. "Perfectly," answered the

Speaker, who was then Mr. Shaw Lefevre, afterwards Lord Eversley. Mr. Craufurd, appearing at his club the next day, was saluted with the exclamation :—" See the conquering Zero comes ! " The next morning when Mr. Gladstone awoke, he found his sixpence irrevocably gone. Ministers were surprised, and Lord John Russell was said to be very wroth.

Mr. Craufurd had greater intellectual independence than any Scotch member of my time. His father was Mr. Craufurd of Auchinames and Crosby Castle, formerly Treasurer-General of the Ionian Islands. His mother was Sophia Mariana, a daughter of Major-General Horace Churchill, and great granddaughter of Sir Robert Walpole. One of her daughters married Aurelio Saffi, the second Triumvir of Rome with Mazzini.

In 1833 the duty on advertisements was 3s. 6d. in Great Britain, and 2s. 6d. in Ireland ; it was reduced to 1s. 6d. in Great Britain and 1s. in Ireland. When, in 1853, the duty was totally repealed, it yielded £180,000.

The policy of the committee of which I write was to encourage publishers who issued papers liable to the stamp duty to continue doing it, and inviting them, in case they were interfered with, to communicate with the committee, who would do what they could to defend them. *The Potteries Free Press and Working Man's Chronicle* was one of these papers. It was published by George Turner, a spirited newsagent of Stoke-upon-Trent, who announced that the paper was "under the protection of the Society for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge." In some cases Mr. Collet gave his name as publisher, so that he might be answerable for the consequences.

To incite Somerset House to action when it showed a politic somnolency, it was decided, at the time of opening Parliament, to get some newspaper of repute to publish a single copy of its issue containing the Queen's Speech, without the newspaper stamp, and call upon the Government to prosecute it. But who would run the risk ? I was asked to ascertain that. All in vain I tried the most likely offices. Then I asked the paper whose intrepidity I knew—the *Leader*. The proprietor was willing, but, being a man of fortune, he prudently consulted his solicitor, who advised him that the resources of mischief concealed in the odious Stamp Act were such that he should ask for a £2,000 bond. They said it ought to be £10,000.

There was no means of giving the bond required, and it fell to me to publish special news without the stamp. If any paper had complied with the request, we intended calling upon Mr. Timm at once to prosecute it. It was therefore fair that proprietors should ask for some indemnity. I believe I inquired whether the committee could promise any assistance in case of my becoming involved in liabilities beyond my means. But I soon saw no guarantee could be given, as the Government, if they had chosen, could condemn me in fines which would have absorbed Mr. Milner Gibson's whole fortune. Mr. Collet was of opinion the Government would not go to such an extreme, but said, for reasons included in the Lord's Prayer, it was well not to "lead them into temptation."

After the Dickens decision of the Court of Exchequer, which declared monthly publications not liable to the stamp duty, I received letters from Mr. C. D. Collet, saying :—"I hope to complete my arrangements for publishing my monthly *War Chronicle* next Wednesday. Will you publish it for me?—paying me at the rate of £3 12s. 2d. per thousand; no credit. An answer will oblige." Mr. Richard Moore and Mr. James Hoppey wrote me letters making the same inquiry. In each case I assented. The news in these *Chronicles* was mainly made up from the columns of the *Empire*, a paper owned by Mr. Thomas Livesey and edited by John Hamilton (afterwards editor of the *Morning Star*). Thus *Moore's War Chronicle*, *Collet's War Chronicle*, and *Hoppey's War Chronicle* appeared. All the *Chronicle* purported to be "published by authority" of the Dickens decision in the Court of Exchequer. We had trouble through the fears of newsvendors; therefore I sent notices to the "trade" saying that a "*Legal War Chronicle*" would be published monthly, as several enterprising persons had announced their intention to start monthly war papers. In order to secure the public the advantage of continuous news of the war, Messrs. Holyoake and Co. had made arrangements to supply all newsagents with one of these papers every week. If difficulty was experienced by booksellers in the country in obtaining the papers, they should write to Messrs. Holyoake and Co., who would supply them from their office." These papers being issued on successive Saturdays in the month, the series gave the public an unstamped newspaper every week.

It struck the Revenue Board as curious that four separate proprietors of monthly papers should choose me for their publisher, and, as they were entirely wanting in confidence in my simplicity, they took action. Writs were issued to alarm us, but the Attorney-General neglected or refused to file information against the proprietor and publisher. The Board of Inland Revenue were excited, and wrote letters to all whom they had served with writs, threatening to anticipate the judgment of the Court of Exchequer and the verdict of a jury by a summary process. This was an unconstitutional and unprecedented procedure. To counteract this threat I assured the vendors, in a further circular, "that it was not likely proceedings would be taken against them, until conviction had been obtained against me; and instructed any one who should be summoned to apply to me or Mr. Collet." As writs were served upon us, and no information filed, it was clear that there was trouble at the Inland Revenue Board. I therefore issued in two colours a large placard as follows:—

SHAM WAR  
Against the Unstamped Press.  
Holyoake and Co.  
Announce that, though  
Diplomatic Relations  
Between Fleet Street and Downing Street have been  
Suspended,  
Yet they have good reason to believe that the Stamp  
Office is commanded by  
Admiral Keogh,  
Whose force is destitute of gunboats, and that there is  
NO REAL BLOCKADE  
In the City of London. Nothing can therefore prevent  
the public from being supplied with the  
"WAR CHRONICLE,"  
Except the  
Connivance or Credulity of  
THE TRADE.  
The "*War Chronicle*," Price 1d., is published every  
Wednesday morning by  
Holyoake and Co.,  
147, Fleet Street, London.  
Signed—Holyoake and Co., Printers.

While the unstamped papers, described in the previous chapter, were being issued, I was under daily liability of arrest. The Crown had the power to arrest every person in my house, seize all the books, and destroy all the printing presses, as they

had done to Mr. Hetherington. I kept a poncho under the counter with some refreshments in, and was in attendance during six weeks, to serve the unstamped papers, as I would never allow any one else to incur the responsibility which I had myself invoked. My brother Austin was not less ready than myself, but I asked him to wait his turn. The poncho, I gave to "Count de" Rudio.

At this time Mr. Edward Lloyd, the founder of *Lloyd's News*, was publishing a penny picture paper, in which he gave an account of the escape of a lion, which, though useful information to the public, was declared to be news. Whereupon Mr. Lloyd found it was less dangerous to fall in the way of the lion than into the jaw of the Stamp laws. He was at once told he must stop or stamp. He stamped, raised his paper to twopence, and lost his circulation. I neither stopped nor stamped. It was computed in one of the publications of the committee for repealing these taxes that I sold some 30,000 copies, which, as the fine upon each was £20, represented fines of £600,000. Besides these, I published twenty-four numbers of the *Fleet Street Advertiser*, which had not a large sale, but every number was liable to the same fine. The best subscriber to it was the Inland Revenue Board themselves, whose agent came regularly every Saturday morning and purchased the first half-dozen copies, so that I was in for £120 of fine before breakfast. In nineteen weeks my liability from official custom alone amounted to £2,280. Finally, I was summoned to the Court of Exchequer to answer to my liability, which obliged me to say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would oblige me by taking the amount weekly, as I had not the money by me. Mr. Gladstone was then the Chancellor, and in my absence from town my brother Austin was one of a deputation to him. Mr. Gladstone said, in his gracious way, "He knew my object was not to break the law, but to try the law." Fortunately for me, the Repeal of the Stamp Duty took place shortly after. Though my solicitors, Messrs. Ashurst and Son, put in an appearance on my behalf, the case was never proceeded with, and I have never applied to have it opened.

All the while I was publishing every week forbidden news in the *Reasoner*. The attention of the Board of Inland Revenue was called to the fact that they were neglecting their

duty by not indicting me, as the *Reasoner* had always published news without a stamp. Eventually they resolved to do it. Their reluctance arose from not wishing to give State publicity to a journal which was not so orthodox as could be desired. As I was a Freeman of the City of London, and my house was within the precincts of the City, it was necessary to take me before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House. Then they found that the City authorities were opposed to having a press prosecution in the City. The reputation of those they had had in the days of Hone and Carlile was such that they coveted no more of it. So the Government left alone the *Reasoner*, the oldest defiant paper in London at that time.

This defiance of issue of *War Chronicles* was done not only in spite of interest and ignorance, but in spite of newsvendors. Though they were selling two hundred illegal papers, they were insensible to their own danger. They held a meeting in St. Martin's Hall a few nights before the Repeal, and sent a deputation to Mr. Gladstone with instructions to dissuade him from going on with his bill. On the other hand, we sent him word urging him to proceed with it. Being a newsvendor myself, I attended the St. Martin's Hall meeting, and moved an amendment in favour of their supporting the Repeal in their own interest.

The newsvendors were present in considerable numbers at some of the public meetings. Their fear was that the introduction of penny papers would deprive them of their profits. Mr. Cobden on one occasion said to them, "He had no doubt that could he meet them a few years hence they would acknowledge that their extreme susceptibility to the interests of their pockets had exceedingly blinded their mental vision."<sup>1</sup> This they have long since admitted.

<sup>1</sup> R. Cobden, M.P., Speech at Exeter Hall, February, 1855.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### *END OF THE FREE PRESS TERROR.*

(1855.)

THE Midland Railway, by putting third class carriages in all its trains, was the first to bring the workman to his destination at the same time as the gentleman. It was foreseen that the repeal of the newspaper stamp would do more for the workman, for it would bring all the news of the world to his door before his employer was out of bed. Instead of having to wait a week for his master's second-hand newspaper, he would have one of his own. This was worth working for.

The Inland Revenue Board was drawn into an ethical difficulty. I sent a memorial asking that the *Reasoner*, of which I was proprietor, might be put upon the same footing as several other publications, religious and literary, which by the use of the stamp were permitted to pass through the post office free. The privilege was worth the penny, and I was willing to pay that sum for it. This cost "my Lords" of the Treasury, the Revenue Office, and the Postmaster, some tribulation. Messrs. Ashurst, Waller, and Morris revised my memorial, and conducted a disquieting correspondence with the Board. Mr. Ashurst had been, as I have said, the adviser of Sir Rowland Hill in the affair of the penny postage, and was master of the art of giving discomfort to the official mind, in the most constitutional way.

When they asked for a reply from the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to acquaint my solicitors that "an official communication will be addressed to Mr. Holyoake from the Lords of the Treasury in reply to his

memorial." At length Mr. J. P. Godby informed me that "the Postmaster-General had been pleased to authorize the *Reasoner* to circulate under the usual newspaper privileges, provided each copy is duly stamped in accordance with the regulation of the office." Mr. Ashurst replied that "Mr. Holyoake, upon application at the Stamp Office, was told that the *Reasoner* could not be stamped, unless he made a declaration that the *Reasoner* is a newspaper, which it is not; and that Mr. Holyoake declined to make any such declaration, as it would be false, and was advised that it would be a misdemeanour to do so." The opinion of Mr. Hoggins, Q.C., and Mr. Phinn, Q.C., which Mr. Ashurst had taken, decided that "it was a misdemeanour besides an act of immorality to declare the thing which was not. The essence of the definition of perjury is that it is a false statement made in some judicial proceeding, but a false declaration that a paper is a newspaper which is not a newspaper is a statutable misdemeanour."

I sent to "my Lords" a list of seventeen publications with the names and addresses of the publishers, all of which obtained post-office privileges by means of a "false declaration." Three of these were the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, *The Clerical Journal*, and the *Protestant Magazine*. Clearly these journals were no more newspapers than the *Reasoner*, yet they made a declaration that they were. Mr. Godby was reduced to the necessity of advising me to make a "false declaration" as the only means of obtaining post-office privileges. Thus we worried the departments, and showed that they connived at public falsehood and gave a premium of privilege to it.

In 1855 the newspaper stamp was abolished. On June 13, 1861, the paper duty followed. The agitation for this repeal was fruitful in devices and in curious incidents, though free from the dangerous penalties of the earlier agitation. In the *Gazette* of the society, Mr. Collet had to write (May, 1861) an article "On the Tax which Nobody Pays." It was proved logically and conclusively, by officials and politicians, that the duty was a tax which came out of nobody's pocket—and how the Chancellor of the Exchequer collected it was the only thing left unexplained.

We owed the repeal of the paper duty to Mr. Gladstone. The opposition in Parliament held the loss to the revenue to

be £1,252,000. No other Chancellor of the Exchequer would have taken the risk of this loss with the income tax at tenpence in the pound. The Bill Mr. Gladstone drew was far more comprehensive as to the removal of incidental restrictions than the one passed under Sir George Cornewall Lewis's manipulation. The philosophical baronet was far excelled by Mr. Gladstone. Where a thing was right Mr. Gladstone went all the way of it.

If the reader should look into the *People's Review* edited by me, and into volumes of the *Reasoner* from 1849 to 1862, he will find more authentic documents and a fuller record of facts concerning this agitation than elsewhere, save in the *Gazette* of the association for the repeal of these taxes, and in official records in Mr. Collet's possession. The readers of the *Reasoner* made repeated subscription in aid of the agitation. For the testimonial to Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. John Francis, the secretary, said I collected in town and country £200. I knew everybody who would give anything for agitations of progress, and, as I went about the country speaking, I could, without expense to the committee, promote their objects.

Mr. John Francis, publisher of the *Athenæum*, whose remarkable life has been published by his son, was distinguished in a high degree by public spirit, practical judgment, and untiring persistence. He contributed greatly to the abolition of the paper duty by establishing a "Newspaper and Periodical Press Association" in support of it. Mr. Milner Gibson and his Parliamentary and public colleagues continued the fight until the repeal of that obstructive impost was won. In 1861, a testimonial of several hundred pounds was presented to Mr. Gibson by a committee of whom Robert Chambers was treasurer.

A secretary of sagacity, energy, and resource is the maker of a movement, and Mr. Collet, who had been the secretary of the "Association for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge" from the beginning to the end (and for seven years of the time his services were honorary) had well earned a testimonial. Afterwards (1862) one was presented to him with grateful unanimity. Among the promoters were the names of W. H. Ashurst, A. S. Ayrton, M.P., E. H. J. Craufurd, M.P., W. E. Hickson, Dr. J. A. Langford, M. E. Marsden, S. Morley, J. Stansfeld, M.P., P.

A. Taylor, M.P., Washington Wilks, and Professor F. W. Newman. Each name had honour in it.

In 1859, Mr. Milner Gibson having accepted the office of President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Ayrton took charge of the Repeal of the Paper Duty. To Mr. Acton Smee Ayrton also belongs the credit of carrying (Feb. 7, 1861) the abolition of the Security System. He had before carried the Bill three times through the House of Commons, only to be rejected by the Lords.

Success was owing to others also, who on the platform gave their great influence to the society. A greater array of eminent men took part in this work than in any other agitation of that time. No cause, not even those of the Anti-Corn Law League, provided for the public of London a more interesting platform of speakers than the Anti-Knowledge Tax Society. On the night of its third public meeting (December 1, 1852), Douglas Jerrold was in the chair at Exeter Hall. Cobden, Milner Gibson, Charles Knight, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, M.A. (the uncle of Herbert Spencer), George Henry Lewes (who was one of the speakers), Samuel Wilderspin, and others were present. George Cruikshank was one whom, when Jerrold saw him enter the committee room, exclaimed—"Now, George, remember that water is very very good anywhere except upon the brain." Cruikshank had become a vehement teetotaller, which Jerrold was not.

Bright spoke on other occasions, as did Cobden. Other speakers were George Dawson, with his easy, luminous, satiric audacity; and Dr. John Watts, with his measured metallic voice, clear statement, and confident mastery of facts. Dr. Watts, in earlier years a fellow social missionary with me in the Robert Owen movement, was always the advocate of free knowledge.

On other occasions we had as speakers G. A. Sala, George Thompson, John Cassell, Professor Key, Charles Knight, Edward Miall, Serjeant Parry, and W. J. Fox. One night Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New York Tribune*, who twice visited me at Fleet Street, displayed a newspaper "of vast dimensions when unfolded," to an Exeter Hall audience who had never seen anything like it. "That is what we have for a few cents in America," exclaimed Greeley, "where we have no taxes on knowledge."

At a soiree given to Mr. Milner Gibson at the Whittington Club in 1854, at which Sir John Shelley presided, Samuel Lucas, of the *Morning Star* (who married a sister of Mr. Bright), and Mr. Cobden spoke. Mr. Gibson proposed "The meinory of Francis Place, Henry Hetherington and the agitators of 1836."

It was Leigh Hunt, in the early days of the *Examiner*, who first used the phrase, "Taxes upon knowledge"—a phrase which passed to every tongue. Lord Lytton, then Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer, was the next conspicuous person who used it, and some erroneously thought he originated it. Though that was not so, he acquired patent rights in it. On the famous night when the stamp fell, I was in the House of Commons when the 10th of Queen Anne was put to death. It was on the 26th of March, 1855, and I was present from four o'clock in the afternoon until nearly one o'clock next morning.

Mr. Bouverie had vacated the chair, the usher raised the mace, the Speaker took his seat, and announced with a voice reverberant as the Long Parliament—loud enough to reach into innumerable sessions to come—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's (Sir George Cornewall Lewis) Bill would be proceeded with.

While Mr. Deedes moved an amendment (in a dull, insipid, gaseous speech, of the carbonic acid kind) to defer the second reading of the Bill, a fashionably-dressed, slenderly-built member appeared on the right of the gangway taking notes. From the Speaker's Gallery he seemed a young man. Before the dull Deedes had regained his seat, the elegantly-looking lounger from the club threw down his hat and caught the Speaker's eye. Rebuking his "honourable friend" (Deedes) for assuming that the House had not had time to understand the bill before it, he announced that twenty years ago he (the lounger) had introduced a similar Bill into Parliament. Strangers then knew that Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was the member addressing the House. It was said that Sir Edward purchased his baronetcy by compromising the Newspaper Stamp Bill of 1836. Be this as it may, he nobly vindicated his liberal and literary fame by his brilliant speech this night. "Do not fancy," he exclaimed, "that this penny tax is a slight imposition. Do not fancy that a penny paper is necessarily low and bad. Once

there existed a penny daily paper—it was called the *Spectator*. Addison and Steele were its contributors. It did more to refine the manners of the people than half the books in the British Museum. Suddenly a penny tax was put on that penny paper, and so one fatal morning, the most pleasing and graceful instructor that ever brought philosophy to the fireside, had vanished from the homes of men. A penny tax sufficed to extinguish the *Spectator* and divorce that exquisite alliance which genius had established between mirth and virtue."

This fine passage was worthy of the occasion. Nothing comparable to it was said during the debate. What might have been the condition of society had the interval of more than a century, between Sir Richard Steele and Charles Knight, been illumined by the activity of a free press, instead of the weary period between the *Spectator* and *Penny Magazine* being one of the parliamentary depression of literature !

Mr. Miall rose several times without catching Mr. Speaker's eye. At length the House observing him, courteously called, "Miall, Miall." The honourable member for Rochdale, who had then begun to wear a beard, and looked all the sturdier a Nonconformist for doing so, then addressed the House ; and his speech was as forcible, as compact, as sharply-chiselled, as anything spoken that night, not excepting Mr. Gladstone's felicitous speech on the Sardinian loan five hours before.

Sir George Cornewall Lewis spoke more fluently than report gave him credit for ; more fluently than Palmerston, who was gutteral, halting, and inelegant. Disraeli's voice, commonly silvery, was, on this night, thick and explosive. His definition of "news" was ludicrous. "N E W S," he said, was derived from the four points of the compass—North, East, West, and South. A fact from one point was not news ; a fact from all four was. Whether *one* fact could come from all four points at once, he did not inform the House.

Those who say old convictions are never shaken, nor votes won by debate, should have stood in the lobby at midnight after this division. A burly country squire of the Church-and-King species—fat and circular as a prize pig—a Tory "farmers' friend," born with the belief that a free press would lead to an American Presidency in St. Stephen's, and that the penny stamp was the only barrier in the way of a French Convention

in this country, and that Gibson, Cobden, and Bright, were counterparts of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat in disguise—this obese legislator, nudging a Liberal who had voted in the majority, said, “I gave a vote on your side to-night ! Lytton convinced me.” A triumph of oratory that for Sir Edward ! 215 voted for a free press on this night—161 against ; majority 54. Lord Palmerston, be it said, threw in some determined and valuable words before the vote.

The next week we placed a new motto on our *War Fly-sheet*, as follows :—“ Consisting exclusively of intelligence from the Seat of War in the *East*, and published in accordance with the recorded and mature judgment of the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer, that intelligence from only one point of the compass is not News.” According to this dictum, an American, an African, or Continental journal was not a newspaper, when its news was indigenous. The *New York Tribune* was not a newspaper when its information was American. The *Journal des Debats* was not a newspaper if its matter was exclusively French. Oh, ingenious Benjamin Disraeli ! Of the two men of literary renown in the House, Bulwer spoke up for freedom of knowledge—Disraeli voted against it.

Every member of Parliament had been supplied by adversaries with a paper marked “ For immediate perusal.” It consisted of various extracts from the *Reasoner*, supposed to be specially calculated to awaken the terrors of the House at the prospect of an unstamped press. A passage was quoted which recorded Mr. Cowen’s permission to incorporate the *Northern Tribune* in the *Reasoner*. That was thought to forbode the immediate dissolution of the Empire. A parody I had written on the Rev. Brewin Grant’s style of controversy was given as also a ground of alarm. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton took up the circular, and commenting upon it, said it had increased his disgust at the opponents of the measure. He called it “ trumpery—an eclecticism of twaddled bugbear.” It happened that these “ twaddlers in bugbear” had used an unrevised list of Members of Parliament and sent copies to twelve dead members. The Postmaster, finding the circulars bore no writer’s name and no printer’s name, but guided by the subject, supposed them to be some advertisement I had issued, ordered

them to be sent to the "Publisher of the *Reasoner* Newspaper." Thus the secret circular was a dead opposition—sent to dead members—returned to the Dead Letter Office—proving a dead failure.

The *English Churchman* said that "the *Reasoner* was at the bottom of this agitation." Every member of the House of Commons and House of Lords was told it; yet in after years, when the blessings of the repeal of the taxes on knowledge were admitted by all classes, I found Christian organs, which declared in 1855 that the *Reasoner* was the cause, claiming the victory themselves, and declaring we had nothing to do with it.

The Government itself gave an instance of this contradiction. Their Stamp Bills included the precise measures indicated in the memorials I had sent to the Treasury. The Lords of the Treasury had told me six months before that "they had no power to grant my request of posting the *Reasoner* with an ordinary postage stamp. "They had no power—the law did not authorise them to grant my request." This was the stereotyped official answer which had strangled a hundred agitations. No movement ever went beyond this point before. We sent the reply of their lordships to eminent counsel, who answered that the lords *had* the power. In another memorial we respectfully submitted these opinions to the Treasury. "My Lords" then replied (but not admitting their power) saying "they had caused a Bill to be prepared for giving them the power." Yet on the night of the debate Sir George Cornewall Lewis assured the House of Commons that no Bill on the matter of postage was necessary, for his colleagues *had* the power to make a Treasury warrant whereby unstamped publications could be admitted to postal privileges at any rate determined upon. The power which the lords under their own seal told us (see *Reasoner*, No. 457, p. 315) they *could not* exercise, they told the House of Commons a few weeks later they *could*.

Thus the association which undertook to free the press from all taxation did free it. When it concluded its agitation, advertisements were free. The stamp upon political knowledge was abolished. News was no longer criminal. The exciseman was banished from paper manufactories, and editors were no longer a criminal class who had to give heavy bail for their good behaviour.

## CHAPTER LV.

### *DYNAMITE ADVOCACY.*

(1855.)

OUTSPOKENNESS is not sensationalism, though it may cause sensation. Outspokenness is the plain, bold, honest, statement of principle. It is reasoned truth, without dishonouring imputation on any of a different way of thinking. Sensationalism is attracting attention by device or language which causes surprise and excitement — appealing to ignorance, passion, or prejudice, regardless whether it pains or repels permanently, providing it answers profitably for the purpose of attracting readers or hearers.

One evil of sensational advocacy is that it allures for a time chiefly a class of people who care only for the gratification "of giving the adversary as good as he sends." Applauding from the love of excitement, caring nothing for the principle, the sensationalists can never be counted upon ; when trouble comes they desert those whom they have cheered into danger. This is not the worst result of the policy of outrage. The practical adherents of the cause are compromised by excesses, and stand aloof from a cause discredited by extravagance. A town is often set against a movement which seems without self-controlling principle, and the advocacy of the cause is killed there. The class of citizens of most influence cease to countenance sensational exhibitions, and, when the halls are once closed against the wilder sort of advocates, no one able to do it takes any part in getting them reopened, lest the same thing should occur again. I have known many towns in which honest and advanced movements have been extinguished in this way for years.

The public hall in Nottingham could at one time be had for the public discussion with the clergy. Mr. Charles Southwell encountered the Rev. Brewin Grant there, giving him in the way of vituperation "as good as he sent." Those who approved of sceptics being assailed did not approve of the reprisal, and arranged that the authorities should refuse the hall. The debate ended in tumult, and long years elapsed before discussions with ministers occurred there again. Before that time, there were ministers of the quality of the Rev. Alexander Syme, entirely dispassionate and fair, and discussions with them were informing to the public. A calculating advocate of Christianity could succeed in closing the halls in any town by inciting foolish adversaries to debate in his own way, when a pretext was furnished for those who distrusted all discussion to get discussion prohibited.

A hall which had cost a considerable sum to erect could have its value destroyed almost in a night by one wild lecturer. Some Freethought speakers consider themselves authorised to be free lances—whereas a free lance is a free traitor, taking credit for aiding a party which he destroys, and all the while helping the party to which he pretends to be opposed. Liberty merely means the power of doing what is right—whereas the sensationalist takes it to be freedom to do what suits his purpose. Denunciation being much easier than argument, denunciation is mostly cultivated.

A generous-minded confectioner in Plymouth, thinking it discreditable that there should be no place in the town where liberal opinions could be advocated, sold his business and devoted his savings to the erection of a hall which he thought might, by letting, yield sufficient for his moderate needs—he being an abstainer on principle, and distinguished by heroic self-denial. I warned him that unless he used judgment as to the speakers, he would find the commercial value of the property destroyed. Not understanding that secular thought required as much regulation and control as religious advocacy, he made no conditions, and the result was that the place acquired the colour of extreme heresy in a few months, and was entirely unlettable for general purposes, as the townsfolk would not go there. The result was ruin to him.

Sensationalism, besides the disadvantage it has brought upon

a cause, has often proved perilous through the disadvantage it has brought upon the individual. Some will go to extremes in encouraging extremes. Excitement and zeal will lead to sacrifices beyond the means of those who make them. This led me to discourage gifts which, when the day of reaction came, would cause regret. A young German gentleman, Max Kyllman, sent for me one morning to an hotel in Regent Street, and offered me two bank notes for promoting the law of affirmation. Not knowing his resources or connections, I gave him one back, saying that "at a future time, if more money was needed I would let him know." Mr. Le Blond, in 1855, for several weeks gave me £10 every Sunday morning at South Place Chapel, as loans for the Fleet Street House. After the fifth morning I refused to take more. At an early period in secular advocacy, I proposed that gift or sacrifice, for public principles, should be based on tithes, not to exceed one-tenth of the giver's means—as he who gave more was likely one day to discourage others who observed or suffered from the consequences of his enthusiasm.

Persecution sometimes incites sensationalism, which is then held as justifying persecution to put it down. If those assailed contented themselves with simply maintaining what was unfairly prohibited, just as though the prohibition was not, persecution would be equally defeated, right would be equally vindicated, and persecution afforded no pretext for recommending itself. The harm of ostentatious defiance by a minority is that power is irritated and becomes more vindictive and intimidating. Those who show the greatest daring are themselves commonly ruined. If their courage sustains them, and they do not repine themselves, their families spread warnings and dismay by telling the story of the disadvantages brought upon them. Then many who could afford to resist are alarmed, and do nothing. The hero of extreme defiance often goes to the other extreme himself, and, after keeping no terms with the Church, ends in taking a pew in it and being as ostentatious in supporting as he was in defying it, without the justification of believing it.

The clergy do not know their own business when they keep what they call "blasphemy laws" on the statute books, since they repress extremes by which they can always profit.

I am neither for time-serving nor for cowardice. I am for courage and good sense—I am for a man doing all he can, and not attempting more than he can carry through. He who errs in extremes by miscalculation is to be respected—he who errs from not calculating at all is disentitled to respect. I confine myself to the detail of effects which I myself have seen.

Many years after my visit to Cheltenham, before described, I had a third time an opportunity of speaking there. Covetous of publicity in the papers for what I had to say, I drew up a placard which might excite curiosity without recalling the memory of the resentful past. I, however, failed entirely to get the ear of the press—by no act of my own. Two friends I much valued, who happened to be visitors there, were desirous of retaliating upon the town for its former treatment of me. Yielding to them, I accepted the placard which they drew up. It contained disturbing lines. I was under no illusion as to the consequences. The public were instantly excited. Some of the residents, in favour of my views, applauded the project of retaliation, and many others who cared more for excitement than conviction made themselves prominent in approval of the proposed attack. In that town my own pride incited me to defiance, and, with command of the press, I should have had satisfaction and success. When the hour of action came, most of the residents who should have stood by me left me to the consequences. The owner of the hall engaged was intimidated by the authorities, and the doors were locked. A large room in an inn was procured with difficulty at the last hour. Not a single resident would give his name to indict the owner of the hall for breach of contract after duly letting it. Costs I had incurred beyond my means I was left to defray. Not a single journal ventured to report the proceedings. My original object, which was to reunite the friends of Freethought in the place, was entirely defeated, and never since has any party of protest or exposition existed in the town. Retaliation is very pleasant, but it is not often propagandism. This maxim is true in political, in moral, and in religious agitation.

## CHAPTER LVI.

### *SAWDUST CONTROVERSIALISTS.*

(1855.)

IN the early days of the *Reasoner*, a gentleman called upon me, saying he wished to contribute an argument upon the existence of Deity. He was a tall, low-speaking man, expensively dressed, and he sometimes came in a carriage with two horses—leaving them in a street near to my house. He gave the name of Aliquis, and desired to be known only by that name. It was ten years later before I knew his name to be Mr. George Gwynne. As he did not wish his name to transpire, I made no attempt to know it. He frequently sent cheques for £5, and occasionally more, to the *Reasoner* Fund. His ambition was to reply to a much paraded “Demonstration of the Existence of Deity” by one who, I believe, was a countryman of his—William Gillespie, of Bathgate, Scotland. No writer who assailed us was so dry, abstract, unimaginative as Mr. Gillespie; and Aliquis, in reasoning against him, acquired like qualities. Though both disputants had great powers of sequence, it was, as respects popular interest, the most sawdust controversy we ever had in that journal. Aliquis would never publish anything until he had discussed every line of his paper with me. When I thought the argument should be differently expressed, or changed in character, he would spend days in recasting it. He usually came to me at night when I was well weary of the day's work, and made me read and analyse for hours every line of his argument. In this way I earned far more than the subscriptions he made to the *Reasoner*. It was impossible not to acquire the belief that the existence of Deity became much less

apparent during the wearisome years these two clever gentlemen spent in endeavouring to make it plain. They gave me the impression that theistical disputants had little material to go upon. Aliquis's was, like Gillespie's, dry-bone argument—a well-articulated frame of logic without a bit of flesh upon it.

True, writers without a gleam of imagination or a single striking sentence on their pen will expect you to publish their articles, which would kill a hundred readers a week and fill with dismay a thousand others. True, a proposition of Euclid has no single sentence which has any gleam of genius in it, but the whole proposition may be as delightful as a poem to him who eventually understands it. But such articles are for students and must be sparsely introduced in a paper for general reading. No popular paper can be conducted by charity. An editor must have money to pay for articles of such quality and variety as he may suggest or select. It is insufficient means that generally render propagandist journals uninteresting save to the converted.

I might here remark that money sent me for public purposes, received only on that ground, and publicly acknowledged as such, and spent with the knowledge of the subscribers, I was sometimes called upon to repay. One, a farmer in the Isle of Arran, whose proneness to extremes in advocacy I at times restrained, and who had sent £10 for the Fleet Street House, many years after threatened an action to recover the amount, with compound interest up to date.

William Honyman Gillespie, of Torbane Hill, Bathgate, had also an office in Melville Street, Edinburgh. Mr. Arthur Trevelyan had chambers in the same building, with only a partition wall between them. Neither knew nor suspected the identity of the other. Yet for many years they were in epistolary conflict. Coming downstairs one day from his chambers, Mr. Trevelyan suffered collision with a gentleman coming up. They mutually apologised and exchanged cards.

“ Dear me,” said Mr. Gillespie, looking at the card he had received, “ are you Mr. Arthur Trevelyan? I am Mr. William Gillespie.”

“ Dear me,” exclaimed Mr. Trevelyan, “ we have been writing against each other for nine years, with only a partition wall

between us without knowing it. We might have discussed our differences with less trouble had we been aware how near we were to each other."

Gillespie always dating from Bathgate, and Trevelyan from Pencaitland, their neighbourhoodship in Edinburgh did not transpire between them.

Mr. Gillespie was the most uninteresting and self-sufficient of all the adversaries we encountered. The Rev. Brewin Grant had a diverting offensiveness ; but Mr. Gillespie had his boundless egotism without being diverting at all. When he had come to an end of a series of his dreary letters, he wrote—"I need not tell you that our debate is finished. No one can be in any doubt as to how the discussion terminated. My adversary—to say nothing of his coadjutors—was flagrantly beaten." Yet all the while Mr. Gillespie was the most abstract, dull, and dry of all disputants. He had a leaden style, and no particle of imagination glimmered anywhere about it. The sawdust style is not uncommon in literature, but these controversialists excelled in it.

Mr. Arthur Trevelyan was the brother of Sir Walter Trevelyan, and uncle of Sir George Otto Trevelyan. Mr. Arthur had the strong decision of opinion which characterised the Trevelyan family. He acted on Archbishop Whately's principle—he not only "believed the opinions he maintained, but maintained them because he believed them." Whenever any emergency arose in the advocacy of views in which he was interested, his support could always be counted upon. If any one applied to me for aid which I was willing but unable to render, and I communicated the case to Mr. Trevelyan, he was sure to aid.

When I wrote the pamphlet, "The Social Means of Promoting Temperance," apart from a Maine Law, it was inscribed to "Arthur Trevelyan, J.P., of Pencaitland, the constant helper by his means, his influence and his example, of Social Progress and Unsectarian Temperance."

Arthur Trevelyan had more life in his writing than either of the others. His interests were wider. He cared for men and little for *a priori* abstractions. He had distinctive thoughts and passages in his communications which were worth noting. Still, he had a catapult style, and threw his arguments at the

reader. They were unconnected ; you could not tell whence they sprung ; but they hit, and often hurt, the enemy.

Arthur Trevelyan, like all his family, had the courage of his convictions. He sacrificed a valuable estate in his youth for love—preferring to marry one whom he liked, to a fortune. Like his brother, Sir Walter, he was an imperious abstainer. He did not believe in temperance—but in prohibition. One day, as I walked with him through his estate in Midlothian, where he had suppressed all the inns, he directed my attention to a girl with her mother's shawl hanging down over her dress. "That girl," he said, "has a bottle of whiskey suspended to her neck. She is the walking public-house of this village."

I answered that "It was a sad sight, and a bad method of enforcing abstention by demoralizing girls. It would be better to do as Lady Noel Byron did on her estates—keep the inns in her own hands, employing persons to manage them at a salary, they having no interest in selling drink, and whose instruction should be to serve but a limited quantity to each applicant."

Difference of opinion brought no estrangement. Arthur Trevelyan had as much tolerance in opinion as he had zeal—a rare thing in one who has great zeal.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### *STRANGE PROCEEDINGS OF A MAN WHO WAS AFTERWARDS BEHEADED.*

(1855.)

SEVERAL times I had received letters urging me to visit a friend in the West of England, whose daughter had read many publications of mine, and much desired to converse with me upon some of the subjects which had interested her. This led her father to invite me to spend a few days at his home. It appeared the young lady had been in ill-health for some time, and when she heard that I was in the courtyard, and about to enter the house, she expired. Afterwards I was his guest on two or three occasions. He wished a remaining daughter to be educated abroad. Her father made many remittances to the master, but heard very little of the pupil, and for a time nothing. One day he received a letter requesting an immediate remittance of money to defray the expenses of her burial, with thoughtful assurances that, since he could do no good, he need not give himself the pain of coming. This suspicious solicitude determined him. Being a man of promptitude, instead of sending the money he went himself, and found his daughter alive. He did not arrive too soon, for it was feared it was intended that she should die. She was confined in a room with so little to eat that other residents in the house, whose sympathy was called to her condition, sometimes threw her food over the fan-light of her chamber. Her father brought her back to his house straightway.

Afterwards he took a foreigner into the house for the purpose of having his daughter privately educated in languages at home.

His sympathy with the struggles of Continental nations at that time blinded him to the fact that everybody is not good even in a kingdom of patriots, and he was again unfortunate in his choice. The teacher he selected had a French wife. My friend's daughter being motherless, the French lady, who had assuming ways, and was a Lady Macbeth in determination, soon interfered in the control of the house. The foreign teachers became distasteful to the pupil, and, very little progress being made, they were ultimately desired to leave, when they refused to go.

The intruders had good discernment, and found out that the gentleman would be subject to unpleasant remarks from his neighbours if it transpired that his sympathy for foreign nationalities, of which they disapproved, had been ill-placed. The astute teachers concluded that he would be likely to sacrifice money rather than that the unsatisfactory relations with them should become known. My friend was anxious on this account to secure a peaceable departure of his vexatious guests ; but there was a limit to which this apprehension might be pushed, of which they were not aware. The foreign lady had made herself a terror. Daily and increasing alarm being created in the house, the daughter one morning ran into the garden to her father for protection. He was a tall, powerfully built man, a Saul in stature, and commonly went about with a long staff, which looked like a young tree from its height and girth. He strode into the house, determined to put an end to the impudence of a forced occupancy of his home by strangers. On his appearance thus armed, the foreigner, who was pacing up and down the parlour, at once saw that mischief was meant, and drew a stiletto. Upon seeing this the host threw away the staff and prepared for a fight in the English manner. Whether the unfamiliar mode of attack dismayed his adversary or the fury displayed by one whose single blow might have broken the bones of the foe, the foreigner capitulated in haste.

A cab was called, and the host went in it to the railway. This act passed for a courteous attention to his guests, but it was really a police precaution to see that they left the district. Forty sovereigns was given them for their journey.

This foreigner was Pieri, who was afterwards beheaded with Orsini, at La Roquette. It was believed that he acted under

the inspiration and terror of the formidable lady he had with him. Conspiracy might be a relief from such dominion. Anyhow a man who was capable of entering into a dangerous plot at the imminent risk of sacrificing his life, with a view to save his country, could not be wholly base ; and if he had been, such perilous devotion as he displayed for the advantage of two nations was some atonement.



*SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE*

PART II



## CONTENTS OF PART II.

---

### CHAPTER LVIII.

UNSUPECTED SPIES (1855) . . . . .	PAGE I
-----------------------------------	-----------

### CHAPTER LIX.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1856-7) . . . . .	IO
---	----

### CHAPTER LX.

IN CHARGE OF BOMBSHELLS (1856) . . . . .	19
--	----

### CHAPTER LXI.

ORSINI THE CONSPIRATOR (1856) . . . . .	26
---	----

### CHAPTER LXII.

A FRENCH JACOBIN IN LONDON (1856) . . . . .	31
---	----

### CHAPTER LXIII.

THE STORY OF CARLO DE RUDIO (1857-62) . . . . .	36
---	----

### CHAPTER LXIV.

STABBING SPIES IN LONDON (1857) . . . . .	40
---	----

### CHAPTER LXV.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE IN THE TOWER HAMLETS (1857) . . . . .	42
--	----

## CHAPTER LXVI.

A LONDON REVOLUTION (1858) . . . . .	PAGE 48
--------------------------------------	---------

## CHAPTER LXVII.

MURDER AS A MODE OF PROGRESS (1859) . . . . .	58
---	----

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

DEFENDING A POLE (1858) . . . . .	63
-----------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER LXIX.

A LOST WILL (1858) . . . . .	69
------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER LXX.

MR. SECRETARY WALPOLE AND THE JACOBIN'S FRIEND (1858) . . . . .	72
---	----

## CHAPTER LXXI.

LORD PALMERSTON AND FEARGUS O'CONNOR'S SISTER (1858-64) . . . . .	76
---	----

## CHAPTER LXII.

THOMAS SCOTT—THE FRIEND OF BISHOP COLENSO (1858) . . . . .	82
--	----

## CHAPTER LXIII.

HOW BISHOP COLENSO BECAME CONVERTED (1860) . . . . .	85
--	----

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

LORD COLERIDGE AND THOMAS HENRY BUCKLE (1859) . . . . .	92
---	----

## CHAPTER LXXV.

BEQUEST OF A SUICIDE (1860) . . . . .	97
---------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

VISIT TO A STRANGE TREASURER OF GARIBALDI (1861) . . . . .	102
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

FAIRIES FIGHTS (1863) . . . . .	PAGE 108
---------------------------------	-------------

## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

THE LAST LESSONS OF THE HANGMAN (1864) . . . . .	115
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

AN ADVENTURE WITH GARIBALDI (1864) . . . . .	119
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXX.

UNPUBLISHED INCIDENTS IN THE CAREER OF W. E. FORSTER (1864) . . . . .	126
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXI.

NAPOLEON III. IN LONDON (1865) . . . . .	134
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

VISITS FROM A MURDERER (1865) . . . . .	137
---	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXIII.

AMONG THE FISHERMEN OF CROMER (1867) . . . . .	142
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXIV.

STORY OF THE LIMELIGHT ON THE CLOCK TOWER (1868) .	146
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXV.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE IN BIRMINGHAM (1868) .	149
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

A DANGEROUS VISITOR (1868) . . . . .	152
--------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

REPORTING SPEECHES WHICH NEVER WERE MADE . . . . .	156
--	-----

## CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

AN UNTOLD STORY OF THE FLEET STREET HOUSE (1868)	PAGE 160
--	-------------

## CHAPTER LXXXIX.

LORD CLARENDON'S CONFESSION (1869-72)	167
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XC.

ASSASSINATION BY A JOURNALIST (1870)	173
--------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XCI.

THE STORY OF THE BALLOT (1868-71)	180
-----------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XCII.

ADVENTURES AT THE HOME OFFICE (1870)	186
--------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XCIII.

STORY OF A LOST LETTER (1870)	191
-------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XCIV.

THE SCOTT-RUSSELL PLOT (1871)	194
-------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XCV.

RETICENCE OF THE BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH (1872)	199
--	-----

## CHAPTER XCVI.

GENEROSITY OF THE BISHOP OF OXFORD (1872)	202
---	-----

## CHAPTER XCVII.

FLIGHT OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON FROM BRIGHTON (1872)	209
---	-----

## CHAPTER XCVIII.

ORIGIN OF THE JINGOES (1873)	216
------------------------------	-----

*CONTENTS.*

ix

## CHAPTER XCIX.

	PAGE
STORY OF THE ANTI-CORN LAW LEAGUE (1874) . . . . .	219

## CHAPTER C.

THE ORATORS OF THE ANTI-CORN LAW LEAGUE (1874) . . . . .	226
--	-----

## CHAPTER CI.

CAREER OF A BOHEMIAN ARTIST . . . . .	232
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER CII.

THE PICTURE RESTORER FURTHER DELINEATED (1877) . . . . .	240
--	-----

## CHAPTER CIII.

ERNEST JONES, THE CHARTIST ADVOCATE . . . . .	248
---	-----

## CHAPTER CIV.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE IN LEICESTER (1884) . . . . .	255
---	-----

## CHAPTER CV.

THREE REMARKABLE EXILES (1884) . . . . .	258
--	-----

## CHAPTER CVI.

REMARKABLE WORKING-CLASS POLITICIANS (1884) . . . . .	263
---	-----

## CHAPTER CVII.

QUITE A NEW VIEW OF JOHN BRIGHT (1887) . . . . .	270
--	-----

## CHAPTER CVIII.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MR. BRIGHT . . . . .	277
--	-----

## CHAPTER CIX.

MR. BRIGHT'S ORATORICAL METHOD AND MANNER OF MIND . . . . .	281
---	-----

## CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER CX.

ORIGIN OF SECULARISM (1850-1890)	PAGE 290
----------------------------------	-------------

## CHAPTER CXI.

THE KNIGHT WHO UPLIFTED THE DEAD HAND	295
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER CXII.

APOLOGY TO THE READER	299
-----------------------	-----

[All these 112 chapters, save three, are revised from the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, 1891-2. The new chapters are "Famous Fights," "Murder Considered as a Mode of Progress," and "Reporting Speeches which Never were Made."]

## CHAPTER LVIII.

### *UNSUSPECTED SPIES.*

(1855.)

SPIES are of two classes—those in the pay of despotism, and those who watch and report upon the proceedings of the enemies of the people. The vocation of the spy is at best a repulsive pursuit. Deceit, false pretences, and treachery constitute the capital of the business, and its success is the success of a traitor. In war it has its only justification. Where murder is the object of both sides, treachery does not count ; it may abridge, or prevent, worse disasters. But in peace it is doing evil that good may come, and introduces baseness into policy. In avowed war the spy of a forlorn hope of a patriotic cause is a pathetic figure. He lives under a double suspicion, and his life is in peril at the hands of foe and friend. He is killed if discovered by the enemy, and he often shares the same fate from his friends, who suspect him from observing his intercourse with the foe. Bound by his mission of secrecy and peril, he is unable to explain himself to any who may be ignorant by whose instruction he acts. And when he succeeds in what he has undertaken, he may find that those to whom he looked for defence and honour may have themselves perished in the same conflict before his dangerous undertaking is over.

The spies of which I write are the venal and baser sort. Some of them do not restrict themselves to discovering plots, but devise them and seduce men to engage in them, in order to betray them.

One of these was Edwards, the spy of Fleet Street, who was employed to prevent the publication of Thomas Paine's works, by finding out the persons engaged in their secret issue, or, failing that, to implicate Richard Carlile in some plot by which he might be got rid of. Edwards, under which name this spy went, was a clever man, who took a room opposite Carlile's shop, professing to be a sculptor, an art for which he had talent. Avowing great sympathy with Carlile's intrepid efforts for freeing the press, and not less admiration for the author of "The Rights of Man," he made a statue of Paine in proof of his sincerity, and presented it to Carlile, who made it one of the ornaments of his shop. The statue is now an ornament in one of the ancient halls of Northumberland. Edwards did not succeed with Carlile, who had such plentiful experience with Government prosecutions as to have vigilant suspicion of all overtures from strangers.

There were several spies in the pay of the Government in the Chartist agitation of 1839. They attended at the meetings of the Chartist Union, whose leaders were against physical force and sought the extension of the suffrage by moral means. These spies sent to congenial papers reports of venomous speeches which were never made, leading the public to regard the speakers as wild and dangerous insurgents. The *Morning Chronicle* was one of the papers open to these reporters. One morning a leader appeared saying—"If the ruffianly language held at the Snow Hill meeting on Friday night—language so foul, so flagitious [which was never uttered], that we reluctantly sullied our columns with expressions which reflect scandal upon an assembly of Englishmen, and are calculated to bring the privilege of free discussion itself into odium and disgrace—if such 'open and advised speaking' is to pass with impunity, then truly the law is a dead letter, and the Government deserves all the contempt with which it is assailed."

The *Morning Chronicle* described two meetings held at Farringdon Hall, Snow Hill, as "Chartist and Irish Confederate gatherings." They had been neither. They were

called by the Co-operative League, a body bent more on social reform than political agitation. The meeting, on Friday night, stated to have been held at the "King's Arms" Tavern, Snow Hill, was held in Farringdon Hall, a building quite distinct from the tavern. It was stated that several of the Foot Guards were there. Only one was present, and he in undress uniform. Mr. Ewen was announced as chairman. The chairman was Mr. Youll. Mr. Walter, reported to have seconded the resolution, was Mr. Cooper; and an indecent expression attributed to Mr. Shorter was never uttered by him. It was stated, also, that the Co-operative League was under the auspices of Douglas Jerrold and William Howitt, who were never seen or heard of in connection with the body. These facts were made known at the time, but with little effect.

About that period there was a small black man bearing the absurd name of Cuffy—a name, however derived or acquired, he foolishly retained, though continually ridiculed by adversaries because of the appellation. He was about the stature of George Odgers, who, many will remember, was once nearly elected member for Southwark. Cuffy was a victim of spy machinations, and was transported. His name contributed to convict him, yet he was an honest, well-conducted man, and much sympathy was felt for him. Mr. Cobden showed him respect by employing Mrs. Cuffy in some domestic office in his household.

The favourite and most successful device of the spies was to advise "speaking out." Their cry was, "The time has come to let the Government know what men think!" Measured and reasonable speech, calculated to impress power without irritating it, was described "as mealy-mouthedness," and men were sent to meetings to applaud, on a secret signal, any outrage of speech by which both speaker and meeting were made to compromise the cause advocated, and justify the repression by force and prosecution, which "friends of order" were always ready to counsel. Their policy was to alarm the timid, who knew nothing of the facts, by a terror which did not exist, and who therefore gave their vote for "strong measures" for exterminating a small struggling party with right and misfortune on their side. Then there would appear among the Radicals a plausible person affecting to burn with patriotic indignation,

and professing to have military and chemical knowledge which he would place at their service. By judiciously giving a subscription to their fund, which he represented as coming from persons who did not wish to be known, he acquired confidence, and created the impression that there were powerful persons in the background willing to aid, provided a blow was struck which would "prove to the Government that the people were in earnest." One of these knaves produced an explosive liquid, which he said could be poured into the sewers, and, being ignited, would blow up London from below. This satanic preparation was tried in a cellar in Judd Street, while I was taking tea in the back parlour above. I did not know at the time of the operation going on below, or it might have interfered with my satisfaction in the repast on which I was engaged.

Another person induced to join in this subterranean plot was a young enthusiast, who had impetuosity without experience, and who was afterwards the subject of many friendly attentions from a Conservative peer. The enthusiast is still living, and there is no reason to suppose that he was not an honest man. He was the type of the men, ardent without foresight, who come into this lumbering, slow-moving world, and are indignant that it does not mend its ways all at once. Their honourable but uninstructed ardour is the material upon which a treacherous spy selects to work. The two spies I next describe were of a superior class. I had personal communication with them extending over several years.

One went under the name of André, a suspicious name, for Washington hanged one of the family. This André was as fat as a Frenchman could be. He was handsome, literally smooth-faced, and mellow ; he was quite globular, and when he moved he vibrated like a locomotive jelly. His speech was as soft as his skin. He had an unaffected suavity of manner, and an accent of honesty and enthusiasm which entirely beguiled you, save for a certain vagueness of statement which warned you to wait for its interpretation in action before you entirely trusted it. He had large commercial views with an indefinite outline, a faculty for finance proposals difficult to fathom, and an instinct for the friendship of men who, possessing money, had philanthropic aspirations without business experience. He first appeared as the friend and counsellor of a group of generous-

minded disciples of Professor Maurice, who became known as Christian Socialists. When they became interested in the organization and the extension of co-operation, his subtle penetration enabled him to see that a business agency might be founded in London for the supply of stores. There was then no Wholesale Buying Society such as that afterwards founded in the North, and which has attained great magnitude. Premises were taken in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, which became costly by the alterations made for the transaction of wholesale business before there existed stores sufficiently numerous to support the agency created for serving them. The antecedents of André, so far as they were known, were calculated to inspire confidence in him. When a young man, he was one of the enthusiastic followers of St. Simon, in Paris, distinguished for intrepidity and devotion in their cause, and he had created a strong impression by his eloquence and propagandist fervour. It was difficult to conceive that a rotund gentleman of luxurious habits could ever have been an ardent apostle ; but, with all his soft obesity, he had the energy of Count Fosco, whom Wilkie Collins has depicted in his "Woman in White," and, like that energetic hero, was not unacquainted with secret conspiracies. When Enfantin and other leading St. Simonians sought effacement, he sought employment—without delicacy or scruple as to the nature of it. He came to England on a political mission devised by the conspirators of the Empire. He was, I believe, an agent in the purchase of the *Morning Chronicle* in the interest of the French usurper, but this was unknown to the gentlemen of the party with whom he connected himself. His business here was that of a spy of the Empire.

The better to effect this object, and to justify his secret employment, it was necessary that he could prove his acquaintance with insurgent parties in England, and his connection with so respectable a body of social agitators as the disciples of Mr. Maurice not only ensured him from suspicion, but afforded him the means of influencing popular opinion in favour of his political paymaster. He became acquainted with famous Chartist leaders, and, as I was personally acquainted with the friends of Mazzini and Garibaldi, he showed me many acts of courtesy.

At that time Christian Socialists were generously promoting the interests of working men and desirous of establishing co-operative workshops. As many of these existed in France, and many were subsequently subsidised by the Emperor with a view to making the Empire popular with working men, André, who had been among them, had precisely that kind of knowledge useful to gentlemen who honestly thought that working men would become more interested in Christianity if they were better cared for, and a considerable fortune was expended by one of the most generous of the party, Mr. E. V. Neale, in establishing co-operative workshops. They did not sufficiently appreciate that the elevation of the working men can only be affected by education within, rather than from without, and that their training is most sure when they employ and risk their own capital. Working men may be aided in their efforts, but they quickliest acquire prudence when they peril their own money as well as that of others.

André inspired me with a feeling of friendliness towards him which has never left me. He was the greatest artist in espionage of any spy I have known. He never asked me for any information which would have awakened suspicion in me, but he gave me opportunities of mentioning things. As, however, my habit was to consider as their own the affairs of others in which I was in any way concerned, I never added to André's political knowledge, but I have no doubt he knew how to turn his acquaintance with me to his private professional advantage, and in ways of which I was unconscious.

As I had never seen Oxford, and had a great desire to learn something of its interior life, André had penetration enough to see that a visit there would be agreeable to me. He had a personal interest in influencing the Dean of Oriel as a subscriber to the capital of a new business project of his own, which he called by the well-chosen title of the "Universal Purveyor." The Dean, like many other excellent Christians, believed that the neglect of the social condition of the people was the cause of popular alienation from Christianity. It never occurred to them that its evidences were defective, and that the alienation the Christian deplored arose in most minds from difficulties it presented to the understanding. The interest I took in any proposal of theirs tending to infuse morality into trade, giving the

workmen participation in the profit of his industry, appeared to them to proceed from growing reconciliation to church tenets, especially as I openly honoured and worked willingly with any Christian person who would render help in this direction. André knew how to colour that action with theological hope. Accordingly, he took me down to Oxford, where I became for awhile the guest of the Rev. Charles Marriott, then Dean of Oriel. I then saw Oxford for the first time, and the happy days I stayed there will always dwell in my memory. The rooms occupied by Mr. Ward, who afterwards became a convert to Rome, were entered through the Dean's chambers, and when we were dining Mr. Ward would sometimes have occasion to pass through. Only once, when he was entering, did I catch a glimpse of his florid face and well-fed figure, so different from Mr. Marriott, who was pallid, thin, and gentle in speech and manners. As Mr. Ward passed through, he carried his hat on the side of his face—a delicate consideration, so that Mr. Marriott's guests might not be under conscious observation. I thought it betokened a gentlemanly instinct, but it also prevented us from observing him.

One day Mr. Marriott conducted me round several of the colleges, showing me things he thought might interest me, and we discoursed on the way on matters of opinion. I told him that I did not share the confidence he had in the premises of his faith, though desiring as much as himself to know the will of Deity, and to do it when I did know it. I was restrained by the difficulty I had of knowing what the Infinite Will might be, except through the works of nature and the necessity of justice, truth and kindness in society. I remember he paused in his walk, and, turning to me, said : "Mr. Holyoake, I would rather reason with a thinking atheist than with a Dissenting minister. I find the minister has always a little infallibility of his own which you can never reach ; while the atheist, who proceeds upon reason, is open to reason, and there is a common ground upon which evidence can operate."

By this time much of the wealth of the Christian Socialists had been dissipated. André appeared alone as the projector of the Universal Purveyor. His prospectuses were models of plausibility and just sentiments, of which the only thing certain was the expensiveness of putting them into practice. As I approved

of his professed object, he had a right to count on my aid ; but he sought it in a form for which I was unprepared. It was that I should put my name to a bill for him to negotiate in the City to meet some immediate requirement of his business. I explained to him the rule on which I acted in such cases, which was never to put my name to a bill unless I was able to pay it if the drawer did not, and was willing to pay it if he could not.

Some time afterwards he returned to Paris, and when, subsequently I inquired for him there, on grounds of friendship, I heard he was in a Government office under the Empire. When the Empire happily fell, it transpired that he was in the pay of the Emperor as Director of the Secret Bureau of Espionage, where his personal knowledge of the English parties and press rendered him a competent and useful agent. He had been a spy all the while he was in England. The last I heard of him was a report of his death, which was probable, as he was too fat to live long ; but the report may have been but a form of effacing himself peculiar, to the St. Simonian order to which he formerly belonged. It is a resort of many, no longer solicitous of personal recognition, to put in circulation a rumour of their decease.

A man of a different stamp, inasmuch as he had scruples of honour, was a certain Major W——, in whom I had more trust, because he had more ingenuousness of manner, and by reason of the company in which I found him. He professed to me to be an agent of Mazzini, to whom I believe he was really attached. He never awakened more than a transient suspicion in that penetrating Italian leader. The major often came to me to give me information, intending to enlist my confidence in his zeal. Now and then he would make me a present of a new patent pen, or some other little novelty which he thought might interest me. He was a well-built, good-looking man of about forty, possessing considerable strength. He lived at Fulham, in comfortable lodgings, and always appeared to have means. This observation led me to inquire, from his friends, whence they were derived, as at the Café d'Etoile, Windmill Street, I often found the major playing billiards with other foreigners, manifestly having time on his hands and money to spend. Occasionally he disappeared, at the time of the rising of the Italian patriots or some affair of Garibaldi's, when he would

send me a small paragraph for insertion in the papers. Sometimes there would appear from other hands a paragraph in the incidental way of news, stating that Major W—— had been wounded, which probably never occurred. When the Empire fell, and the list of Napoleon's agents found at the Tuileries was published, we were all very much surprised to find, in addition to the name of André, that of the major. There was no doubt that he communicated to the enemy information of the forces and resources of the insurgents. But there was reason to believe that he made, as many other Italian spies were known to do, a resolution never to betray Mazzini, nor compromise any movement under his instructions.

A sensuous obesity had much to do with André's success. Fatness is a force in politics, though its influence is overlooked. Cassius would never have been suspected by Cæsar had he not been lean. Blatant bulk without sense goes further with a popular audience than bones with intelligence. The Tichborne Claimant would never have had so many followers had he been thin. A fat person is always graceful ; his motions are without angularity, even the inclination of the head is self-limited ; the nerves themselves are so embedded that they betray no emotion on the surface. This was shown in the Claimant, who, when his friends and the noble lord who was his supporter returned to the Claimant's chambers in Jermyn Street, all depressed and unmanned by the adverse turn affairs were taking, he was entirely unperturbed, maintaining an easy air, which shamed and reassured his dismayed friends. A peer could not have manifested more dignity, or a philosopher more calmness. It was all owing to the physical impossibility of his manifesting solicitude.

## CHAPTER LIX.

### *UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.*

(1856-7.)

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, whose age at his death exceeded ninety, enjoyed for seventy years reputation as a poet. As is the case of few poets, he excelled in prose as well as verse. In all his life there was hardly any tyranny against which his brave spirit did not utter an indignant protest. In early manhood, after he had dealt with his patrimony in land with more than princely splendour, he led a troop to join the Spanish patriots who rose against Napoleon I. On every act of national heroism he lavished splendid praise. Late in life an action was brought against him by a lady in Bath, who had provoked him by acts which he regarded as implying meanness and ingratitude. Against her he wrote verses with a satiric vigour which belonged to him alone, which even Swift did not equal. Judgment was given against Landor, when he asked me to print for him a justification of himself, and desired me to transmit copies to certain persons whose names and addresses he gave me. Though he knew his publication would involve him in serious consequences if traced to him, he made no stipulation that I should keep the commission secret. Nor did I (though, as printer, I was liable in law in like manner) make any stipulation for indemnity. In applying to me, I supposed he had reason to believe that he could trust me in a matter where confidence might be of importance to him. I had Landor's manuscript copied in my own house, so that no printer should by chance see the original manuscript in the office. My

brother Austin, whom in all these things I could trust as I could trust myself, set up and printed with his own hands Landor's defence, so that none save he and I ever saw the pamphlet, until the post delivered copies at their destination. A reward of £200 was offered for the discovery of the printer, without result. Twelve years later, Landor being then dead, I told Lord Houghton I was the printer of his "defence," but until this day I have mentioned it to no one else.

In his first letter to me, Landor contemplated my publishing the copies, but this idea was soon abandoned, as appears in his letters. The action against him, which had then recently been decided, had cost him more than £1,500, and another action might arise had I placed the "Defence" on sale.

The eight-paged octavo pamphlet bore the title—

MR. LANDOR'S REMARKS  
on a  
SUIT PREFERRED AGAINST HIM  
at the  
SUMMER ASSIZES IN TAUNTON, 1858,  
Illustrating the  
APPENDIX TO HIS HELLENICS.

Landor's first letter to me was the following :—

" FLORENCE, March, 22, 1859.

"SIR,—I know not whether you will think it worth your while to publish the papers I enclose. Curiosity, I am assured, will induce many to purchase it, my name being not quite unknown to the public. For my own part, I can only offer you five pounds for 100 copies—the rest will remain yours. The esteem in which I have ever held you induces me to make this proposal.—I am, sir, very obediently yours,

"W. S. LANDOR.

"No action was brought against the tradesmen for their reports, which I twice published in Bath, and the publications were bought up by Mr. H. Yescombe; nor dared he produce them in his action against me. The action was for verses which the judge would not permit to be recited in court, where two falsifications might be pointed out, one of which (as a jury-

man is reported to have said), *would have altered the case, and, of course, the verdict.* W.S.L."

Landor did not take into account that further indictable matter after the conviction would be regarded by the Court very seriously. The "falsification" he refers to in the preceding letter is a curious instance of the value of a comma. The appellation which the lady who brought the action against him took to herself was Caina, which is in Dante a region of hell. The judge did not remember the meaning of the name, and appears to have assumed that Landor applied it to her. Landor, using Milton's allegory of "Sin and Death," whose offspring would not be fair to look upon, alluded to a young lady whom he considered had been ill-treated by Caina, and wrote :—

"Thou hast made her pale and thin  
As the child of Death by Sin."

"That is, begotten by Death on Sin. But the plaintiff's lawyer," Landor said, "inserted a comma which was not to be found in his lines." The lawyer, by placing a comma after Death, would make it appear that Caina was guilty of some horrid sin. The jury found out too late what had been done.

After he had received a proof of his "Defence," to use his own term, he wrote :—

"Your letter has highly gratified me. Would you kindly take the trouble to send copies to the following ?—

To Phinn, M.P. ....	3
Monckton Milnes, M.P. ....	3
The Judge whosoever he was (It was Baron Channell)...	3
Lord Brougham .....	3
Mr. Hall, Highgate.....	3

And the principal periodicals, newspapers, &c., Leigh Hunt, Linton, and whoso else you please. The rest to me at Florence."

In another letter he further directed me to send copies to other persons, and named the papers he wished to receive

them—*Times*, *Daily News*, *Literary Gazette*, *Examiner*, *Edinburgh Review*, *Quarterly Review*. John Forster, Montague Square, 3 copies; Kossuth, Admiral Gawan, Sir W. Napier, Scinde House, Clapham Park, 3 copies; 20 to Florence; the remainder to Charles Empson, Esq., The Walks, Bath.

In a further letter he wrote, saying :—

“DEAR SIR,—I forgot, it seems to me, a few persons to whom it seems desirable a part of my hundred copies should be sent :—

3 to Mr. Carbonell, Camden Street, Camden Town.

3 to Mrs. West, Ruthen Castle, Denbighshire.

3 to some Masters in Chancery, whose sorry adversaries have tried to obtain an injunction that nothing should be paid to me or my family out of my estate.—I remain, Dear Sir, truly yours,

W. S. LANDOR.”

As I had become unwell from overwork, my brother Austin reported what had been done, and the following letter Landor wrote to him :—

“DEAR SIR,—I am grieved to hear of your brother’s illness. I very much esteem him, and hope he may soon regain his usual health.

“Many thanks for your care in sending the copies according to my direction.

“I know nothing of the American publishers, but will inform my friends in that country that they may obtain copies from New York. My opinion is that many would be sold in that country. I am, Dear Sir, yours very truly,

W. S. LANDOR.

“Mr. AUSTIN HOLYOAKE.

“Pray send 3 or 4 copies to J. Forster, Esq., Montague Square, London” (not remembering that he had mentioned them before).

His next letter was to me :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am as sorry to hear of your continued illness as at my failure of obtaining redress in my grievous wrongs. It may be necessary that the title page containing

your name should be torn off ; but surely *then* it would be quite safe to send a dozen copies to Captain Brickman, Beaufort Buildings, Bath, with my compliments. Could not the whole come out as printed at Genoa ? This is suggested to me as being safe and practicable. Of what is now printed, send me a dozen, without the title page containing your name. I have promised them to friends about to leave Rome and Florence for a tour in Switzerland.—I remain, my Dear Sir, with high esteem, yours,

W. S. LANDOR."

In the letters I quote of Landor's in relation to his defence, I omit many remarks and also names which, however justifiable they were from his pen in relation to his own cause, I, who have no resentment to pursue, do not reproduce. They would be painful to others or the survivors of others. Forster in his "Life of Landor" quotes some letters which ought to have been omitted for the same reason. What is true, unless it has public interest or instruction, should have no place either in history or biography ; and what is known to be untrue, and which Landor, being a man of good faith, would not persist in when it was shown to be untrue, should be precluded from repetition.

The next letter I quote in full :—

FLORENCE, Oct. 5.

" MY DEAR SIR.—On the tenth of last month I wrote a few lines to you enclosing a letter, in reply to a very polite one, remonstrating on mine to Emerson. A few days ago, I found my few lines intended for you in my desk. Pray let me hear, at your leisure, whether this reply ever reached you ; for several of my prepared letters entrusted to a servant never arrived at their destination.—Believe me, Dear Sir, very truly and thankfully yours,

W. S. LANDOR."

Forster, in his "Life of Landor," if I remember rightly, relates that Emerson had seen some wonderful microscopes in Florence, and spoke of the uses to which they were applied ; but he found that Landor despised entomology, yet in the same breath said, " The sublime was in a grain of dust " : which anticipated the fine saying by Herschel about the microscope

and telescope being explorers of the infinite "in both directions."

So far as I know, Landor's reply to the friend who remonstrated with him concerning his letter to Emerson has not been published. It covers four large quarto pages. Singularly, being from Landor, it was against the impending war for the extinction of negro slavery. It is a remarkable defence of the Southern side of the argument. I cite here only a few sentences in which his bright precision is visible in every one :—

"Interest is a stronger bond of concord than affinity. Beware of inculcating unintelligible doctrines. Men quarrel most fiercely about what they least understand. Laws are religion ; let these be intelligible and uncostly. It is pleasanter at all times to converse on literature than on politics. However, on neither subject are men always dispassionate and judicious. They form opinions hastily and crudely, and defend them frequently on ground ill chosen. Few scholars are critics, few critics are philosophers, and few philosophers look with equal care on both sides of a question."

One day I received the following letter :—

"6, CLIFFORD STREET, July 7, 1872.

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,—I remember well having a little talk with you. At what time of the day are you at home, as I should like to renew the acquaintance.—I am yours sincerely,  
"HOUGHTON."

I answered Lord Houghton, saying I should appreciate the honour of his calling. Ordinarily I was at 20, Cockspur Street, where I then resided, from 5 to 9 p.m. When the House of Commons sat in the morning, I was home much earlier ; but it was an act of mercy to say that my chambers were at the top. Once there it was a pinnacle from which could be seen all the kingdom of London and the glory thereof ; but I include no other feature in the reference, remembering Lord Brougham's admonition, "Beware of Analogy."

Afterwards Lord Houghton asked me "to give him the pleasure of breakfasting with him at Clifford Street at 10.30 on Saturday next, the 20th instant."

The breakfast justified the celebrity Lord Houghton's morning repasts had obtained. Several breakfasts and dinners remain in my mind. Even the flavour as well as the charm I can recall ; but for profusion and variety of joints, birds, fish, wines, fruits, coffee, and cigars, Lord Houghton's breakfast exceeded all. I remember the astonishment he expressed to a new footman who brought in coffee half an hour before the birds and wine ended. On an easel near the table was a new portrait in oil of Landor, which was shown to every one. This led me to mention that I had several letters of Landor's, at which Lord Houghton expressed great interest, and I promised he should see some of them. I made up a parcel, with notes explaining them. Being precious in my eyes, I left them myself at his house. I heard no more of them. At times I sat behind him when he came to the Peers' Gallery in the Commons, and expected he would refer to them. At length I wrote and asked for their return. In July, 1873, he wrote from the House of Lords to say, "he was distressed to find that, acting on the supposition that I had given him the Landor MSS., he had bound some of them up with one of his books. If worth while, he would take them out again and send them." As he had never acknowledged their receipt, I did not understand how he came by the impression that I had given them to him. It was as proofs of Landor's confidence in me that I most valued them, and also as evidence of the risks I was willing to incur for him. The letters his lordship had bound up I told him "I was quite content should remain in his possession, as it would be a pleasure to think they would be preserved by him." As Lord Houghton was a valued friend of Landor's, I felt that he was a congenial custodian of relics of him. He sent me copies of the letters he retained, and others which accompanied them he returned, writing :—

"FRYSTON HALL, FERRYBRIDGE, Nov. 28, 1873.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am obliged for the loan and the gift. I am afraid Landor's repute still remains in the world of men of letters, and not in that of national literature. There is no doubt that with him the thing said is less important than his manner of saying it. Every day we become less and less careful of style for its own sake.—Yours sincerely,

"HOUGHTON."

On such a subject no opinion of mine is comparable with Lord Houghton's ; nevertheless, I own I value Landor's writing for its sense as well as its style, and think that his "repute" in "national literature" is higher and more assured than Lord Houghton supposed.

Landor did me the honour to write to me many times (after the affair of his pamphlet) on Italian affairs. Some communications I sent to the *Newcastle Chronicle*, where they would be more influential than in any paper of mine ; some, relating more to social life and character than to public affairs, I inserted in the Journal I edited. Landor made scarcely a correction in his proofs. He was sure of what he wanted to say, and said it in unchangeable terms. He seldom dated his letters. In one from Scena, July 3 (during the Italian struggle), he remarks :—“If I had any photograph, I would gladly send it you. Three were sent to me from Bath, but I know not the name of the artist. Ladies have all three.” He wrote with enthusiasm of Garibaldi, saying, “I hope Sicily may become independent, and that Garibaldi will condescend to be its king under the protection of Italy and England.” The following sonnet he sent me ends with a fine line on Garibaldi :—

“ SICARIA.

Again her brow Sicaria rears  
 Above the tombs : Two thousand years  
 Have smitten sore her beauteous breast,  
 And war forbidden her to rest.  
 Yet war at last becomes her friend,  
 And shouts aloud  
 ‘ Thy grief shall end.  
 Sicaria ! hear me ! rise again !  
 A homeless hero breaks thy chain.’ ”

Walter Savage Landor I admired for his force, simplicity, directness, and the wonderful compression of his style : for his singular fearlessness, determination of thought, and his Paganism. As I was precluded from engagements on the press by reason of my name, I adopted that of “Landor Praed.” Landor in his graceful way sent me his authority to use it, for reasons I may not repeat, as they existed alone in his generosity of judgment.

One night near the end of his days, after Charles Dickens  
 VOL. II. 3

and John Forster had left him on their last visit, he wrote his own epitaph in these noble words :—

“ I strove with none—for none were worth my strife :  
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art.  
I've warmed both hands before the fire of life :  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.”

He said, in his incomparable way, “ Phocion conquered with few soldiers, and he convinced with few words. I know of no better description of a great captain or a great orator,” which might be said of himself.

## CHAPTER LX.

### *IN CHARGE OF BOMBSHELLS.*

(1856.)

IT was at Ginger's Hotel, which then stood near Westminster Bridge, that I first saw the bombs whose construction was perfected afterwards for use in Paris, in the attempt to kill the Emperor Napoleon III. The bombs were in sections then. When strangers came into the coffee-room, Dr. Bernard laid them back on the seat between him and a friend. Understanding machine work, I could judge whether they were well devised for their purpose, which was my reason for being there. At a later stage I was told that Mazzini thought they might be useful in the unequal warfare carried on in Italy, where the insurgent forces of liberty were almost armless.<sup>1</sup>

He who gave the order in Birmingham for their manufacture, also gave his name and address at the same time, and went down to see the maker when there was delay through doubt as to the kind of construction specified. He used no disguise or concealment of any kind. He acted just as an inventor might act who wanted a new kind of military weapon made. When two of the shells were afterwards delivered to me to make experiment with, I understood that they were a new weapon for military warfare in Italy, to be used from the house tops by insurgents, when the enemy might be in the streets

<sup>1</sup> Many persons imagine that novel deadly projectiles are a device of insurgents and are of modern date. Whereas "Infernals Machines" were used by the English at Dunkirk and St. Malo, and at Havre de Grace by the English and Dutch, under King William. The first inventor of them, or the first known to employ them, was Frederick Jambelli, an Italian engineer, at the siege of Antwerp, under the Duke of Parma, 1585.

firing into houses, as the Louis Napoleon troops did in the days of the Presidential butchery in Paris at the *coup d'état* of 1852. At the time of the meeting at Ginger's Hotel, if there was any thought of operating in Paris, the design was known only to the six persons ultimately concerned—among whom neither myself nor Mazzini was included.

When the war-balls came into my hands I had small conception of what I had undertaken in consenting to test them. The detonating powder with which they were filled had been prepared for quick explosion. "Elizabeth," a courageous young woman engaged in the household in which Orsini resided, had, well knowing the danger, superintended the drying of the powder before the kitchen fire, where, had accident happened, she had been heard of no more, and any persons above would have been made uncomfortable. Percussion caps were on the nipples of the shells (which, like porcupine quills, stuck out all round them) when I received them. Their bulk being from four to five inches in diameter, they were heavy enough to be quite a little load to carry about ; and thinking that any force used in removing the caps, which were firmly fixed, might cause an explosion, for which I was not provided, I left them on. Deeming it best to carry them apart, lest coming into collision with each other they might give me premature trouble, I put one into each of the side pockets of my coat. As I went along the street it occurred to me, that it was undesirable to fall down, as I might not be found when I wanted to get up.

When I arrived at home I packed the bombs considerately in a small, harmless-looking black brief bag ; but where to put the bag was the question. I had no closet which I was accustomed to lock, and to do it might occasion questions to be put which I did not want to answer, as the truth might create apprehension that the inscrutable things might go off of themselves, which for all I knew they might. This was, however, the only futile apprehension that occurred to me, for my wife made no trouble about the matter, and found a place of safety for the parcel. She had respect for those for whom I acted, and readily aided.

The next morning found me setting off to Sheffield, where I had an engagement to lecture, and in which town I had proposed to try this new weapon of war. The insurgent leaders of that day had no funds to spare ; and by choosing a time

when I had to travel anyhow, it avoided the expense of a special journey. The selection of Sheffield was made by me as being a noisy manufacturing town, where the addition to its uproar of a bomb going off would be little noticeable. Going on the journey out to the railway station, I did not take a cab through fear the cabman or porter might snatch up the bomb-bag in which I had placed the shells, and afterwards throw it down carelessly. So I carried that bag in one hand and my portmanteau in the other. At the station I found opportunity of putting the contents of the bag into my pockets. I was afraid of the bag in the carriage : it required so much watching. A passenger might at any minute suddenly remove it to make room for some box which might strike against it, and as suddenly disperse the travellers themselves. Besides, I could never leave the train for refreshment, with the bag in it ; and the third-class journey was long in those days from London to Sheffield—the Midland Company not having set the generous example of carrying third-class passengers with swift trains. With a shell as large as a Dutch cheese in each pocket, I looked like John Gilpin when he rode with the wine kegs on either side of him. But I passed very well as one who had made ample provision for his journey. My only anxiety was that some mechanic with his carpenter's or plumber's basket might choose to sit down by my side, when a projecting hammer or chisel might be the cause of an unexpected disturbance. For the same reason I thought it wiser not to sit in the corner of the carriage, where one of my pockets oscillating against the side by sudden motion of the train might occasion difficulties there.

On arriving at Sheffield the trouble did not end. In the house where I lodged new perplexities arose. I might ask for a closet in which I might lock up my peculiar luggage, but my landlady might have a duplicate key and be just curious to see what I was so careful in securing ; and thus some accident might ensue upon the discovery. This fear deterred me from that expedient. My watchfulness kept me a prisoner in the house, and when I went below to write I took the bag and placed it on the table, keeping pens and paper in the same receptacle to divert attention from the other contents. Sunday was an entirely troublesome day with my percussioned companions, because I had to carry the bag twice to the morning

and evening lecture and place it upon the table before me while I spoke. As I took my notes and papers from the bag, its presence on the table was a matter of course. It was not prudent to put it under the table, lest the toes of some excited adversary might kick against it there. Had my opponents, who were numerous at that period, had any idea of the contents of my bag, they would have been very brief in their observations. At night I was again solicitous, fearing something should occur in the house, where there were many inmates.

Monday was welcome to me when I could take one of the missives out with me and seek a place for its explosion. As I might need to move rapidly after throwing it, I concealed the one I left behind between the mattress and the bed in my room, after the bed was made for the day. Had anything happened to me to prevent my return, the next lodger sleeping in the bed had found something quite inexplicable under him. I had lived in Sheffield and knew my way about, having walked through its suburbs with Ebenezer Elliott and other rambling friends of that time. But I had never observed the roads with a view to present requirements. I walked in various directions until afternoon, before finding a sufficiently straight road, without houses upon it. It was necessary to command with my eye a long sweep of way, since I must operate in the middle thereof, and be sure that no person could enter upon it from either extreme without my seeing him. Besides, I had to examine both sides of the road to be certain there was no lane or bye-path by which unseen persons could emerge and be struck by any flying fragment about at that minute. After all my trouble, pedestrians, or vehicles, or horsemen, were continually coming into sight ; and I had to return home without making any attempt that day. And night was useless, it being more dangerous for my purpose than day. Had I had a companion to keep watch with me, we might have found an opportunity ; but it was my duty not to trust any one with a knowledge of my object. There was no knowing what alarm he might take at being in my company with the uncertain missives I bore about me.

The next day I took a different course—that of selecting a disused quarry, as that would test the quality of the bombs under the most favourable circumstances. If one would not

explode by its own momentum of descent on so hard a floor, it would show that its construction was an entire failure. The quarry was in an immediate suburb, not very far from the centre of the town. There were several villas in sight of it, with gardens that came near to the verge of it. What would be the amount of noise I should create, or what would be the effect of it, I could not tell. I had to trust that it might pass among other commotions to which Sheffield was subject. Having examined the quarry to ensure that there was no one in it, and finding no one above, I threw the bomb from the top—from a point where I could shelter myself in case the explosion brought any fragments my way. The sound was very great, and reverberated around. Expecting people would run from their houses, I quickly arose and sauntered away. I met a person hastening towards the spot. "Did you hear that great noise?" he asked. "Oh, yes!" I answered. "I think it came from the quarry," he replied. "Had it come from there I must have seen it," I answered, "as I passed by it. It might be some cannon firing. If you can show me a pathway to yonder field, we should see if there is anything going on there." He turned and went with me, but we found nothing there. I was desirous he should not get to the quarry until the smoke had disappeared. Later in the day I returned to the place, lest some portions of convexed nippled iron should lie about, which being found might excite curiosity; but nothing was to be seen. I posted a paper to London, without address or signature, saying:—

"My two companions behaved as well as could be expected. One has said nothing; perhaps through not having an opportunity. The other, being put upon his mettle, went off in high dudgeon. He was heard of immediately after, but has not since been seen."

Finding the deposited shell in the bed where I had left it, I returned to town with it, when it was proposed that I should take another shell with the one I had, and proceed to Devon, where dwelt one who had the courage for any affair advancing the war of liberty. For this journey I received thirty-two shillings, as the distance was great; and this was the cost of the third-class fare. It was the only expense to which I put

the projectors of these wandering experiments. The object was to ascertain whether the new grenades would really explode, when thrown as high as a man could throw them, and falling on an ordinary road. The journey West was less troublesome than that to the North, as the railway carriages were less crowded, and mechanics carrying tools were much fewer. My friend lived in "The Den." This was the actual name of his residence, and not inappropriate, considering the nature of the business we had on hand, when we two issued from it. The vigilance falling to me was much diminished, as my host could take care of my "brief bag" when I needed personal liberty.

We soon found a suitable highway. My friend watched the way, and, being tall, could take a wide range of view ; but it was necessary to choose a field which had a stone fence, where, after throwing the bomb into the air, I could at once lie down and be protected while the fierce fragments flew around. There was, however, little need of the precaution, as no explosion followed. The nipples buried themselves in the earth, and the obstinate shell remained fixed and silent. I had not foreseen this, and it was necessary to remain on the ground a while lest the thing might go off after some time. It was not possible to wait long, for a signal told me a passenger was descried. The difficulty then was to get the perverse ball out of the earth, since plucking it might occasion an abrasion of the cap, and cause it to burst while I was over it. Happily, I restored the wilful shell to my pocket and I went to meet the traveller to ask him "if he knew where there was a good place for football about"—in case he had observed the unusual movements on the way.

Having no taste for further trials on the common roads, we found opportunities of throwing the two portable thunderbolts on a really hard surface, where, with loud report, every fragment flew into untraceable space. It was not without satisfaction that I saw, or rather heard, the last of my perplexing companions. My next report to London said :—

"Leniency of treatment was quite thrown away upon our two companions. As a man makes his bed, so he must lie upon it ; still out of consideration, we wished it to be not absolutely hard. But that did just no good whatever. The harder treat-

ment had to be tried : and I am glad to say it proved entirely successful. But nothing otherwise would do."

The result of the experiments was that the bombs in the first state in which they were perfected were proved to be inefficient ; unless thrown to a great altitude in the air they would not explode on an ordinary roadway. If the percussion caps did act, they failed to ignite the contents of the shell. Except upon a well macadamized and hardened ground, or upon flagstones, they could not be depended upon for the purposes for which they were intended. They would not answer for ordinary military operations, where the surface might be soft ground or grass land. Whether the bombs used in Paris were improved, or whether the choice of Rue Lepelletier, where the ground was firm, was determined by the experiments upon which I reported I never inquired.<sup>2</sup> If my report ever became known to any one concerned in that affair, it probably had some instructive result.

<sup>2</sup> Some time ago sections of the shells used in Paris were drawn and published. They certainly were not of bombs which passed through my hands.

## CHAPTER LXI.

### *ORSINI THE CONSPIRATOR*

(1856.)

ORSINI was an egotist, but, like Benvenuto Cellini, he had something to boast of. His love of heroic distinction helped to make him a patriot ; the passion for renown helped him to excel all other patriots in daring and in doing things of which Italian patriotism may always be proud. The escape of Baron Trenck was not more wonderful than Orsini's escape from the impregnable fortress of San Giorgio. The narrative of his astonishing adventures, published under the title of "The Austrian's Dungeon," and translated by Madame Mario, shows, in force of narration, that he was a good writer as well as an intrepid soldier. When it was ready for the press he came to me, through the instructions he had received, for suggestions as to the best mode of issuing it. I see him now as he stood in the shop in Fleet Street, the sun falling upon his dark hair, bronzed features, and glance of fire. I told him I would bring out his book gladly, but that Routledge was able to put many more thousands into the market than I was, and would no doubt give him £50 for the MS., which, though it did not amount to much, was of moment to an exile. Routledge did give him £50. The title, "The Austrian Dungeons in Italy," was one of interest at the period, but, if reprinted under the title of "The Wonderful Escape of Orsini," or some other which indicated its marvellousness, it would have interest in the literature of adventure as permanent as Silvio Pellico's story. There were heroes in Italy all about. Bystanders took Orsini, lame and stained with mud and blood, on the morning of his

escape, and secreted him with a certainty of themselves suffering torture and death in the same fortress, were they discovered. The whole district was then overrun with spies. He who realises this will appreciate the courage and resource of the peasant people—only to be matched in Ireland. I know of no single book concerning Italy which more stirs the blood of indignation at Austrian subjugation than Orsini's narrative. The address appended to his book (he could give his address in England) was 2, Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park, July 10, 1856. A year later he was headless.

Felice Orsini relates that an Austrian colonel was one day galloping through Mercato di Mezzo, followed by a large dog. A youth of sixteen was passing by with a smaller dog, which was attacked by the colonel's and almost killed. To save his dog, the youth picked up a stone and hurled it at the colonel's. By chance it struck its head, and it fell dead. By order of this colonel the youth was arrested and sentenced to 30 blows on the cavaletto, which meant 90 strokes of the bastinado—for three strokes counted as one blow. When the unfortunate youth was removed from the Cavaletto he was dead. On the following day the colonel was sitting with some of his fellow officers in the Café dei Grigioni. A man suddenly appeared in their midst, and after despatching the colonel with several stabs of his poniard, disappeared before any one could arrest him. This was the father of the boy who had died under the bastinado. That was a righteous assassination.

Orsini, by his attempt to destroy the French usurper, intended also to avenge Italy upon the false President of the Republic who sent troops to put down the heroic Republic of Rome. Orsini perilled his head to do for France what thousands wished done, and no one else attempted, with the same determination. When Cato visited the palace of a tyrant and saw the persons he put to death, and the terror of the citizens who approached him, he asked, "Why does not some one kill this man?" Orsini came forward in like case to do it. Those who engage in political assassination should have no hesitation in sacrificing themselves. If they are careful for their own welfare, they lose their lives all the same. By using bombs, Orsini imperilled the lives of others, and, being wounded by a fragment which filled his eyes with blood, was unable to complete his design.

After his execution at La Roquette, a compromising article appeared in the *Westminster Review*, upon which I addressed the following letter :—

“ 147, FLEET STREET, June 17, 1860.

“ TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘WESTMINSTER REVIEW.’

“ DEAR SIR,—On the part of the colleagues and friends of Orsini, I am requested to solicit your attention to the following passages in the *Review* for January, 1860. We believe we shall not appeal to you in vain to do justice to the dead. What is asked is the correction or proof of the statements questioned.

“ You say—‘Through a confidential agent, he (Louis Napoleon) conveyed a solemn assurance of his intentions to Orsini, who had been a member of the same Carbonaro conspiracy in 1831 with the Emperor. Orsini declared himself satisfied with this communication. He gave the persons who brought it a list of friends in Italy, whose co-operation was to be sought at the proper time, and then wrote as the testament of his dying convictions the famous letter, pointing to Napoleon III. as the coming liberator of his country, which was printed in Turin, having been sent thither by the Emperor for publication. Soon followed the interview at Plombieres with Count Cavour, and the project succeeded rapidly towards execution.’

“ In connection with this statement, I submit the following facts :—

“ Orsini was not born until the end of December, 1819.

“ In 1831, when he is alleged to be a joint conspirator with Louis Napoleon, Orsini was a boy at school, being only eleven years of age ; and he remained at school until 1836—until he was sixteen.

“ It was not until 1843 that he was a member of any secret society.

“ He never was a member with the Emperor. He never was a Carbonaro at all.

“ He never saw Louis Napoleon before the year 1857.

“ The ‘famous letter’ referred to was not in Orsini’s French. He did not write French well. The letter appeared in pure Florentine Italian. Orsini was educated as a Bolognese, and was by no means a master of good Italian.

"Without proof it is not to be believed that Orsini, of all men, would 'give a list of his friends' to the man whom he sought to kill. He was not the man to do it to save his own life. Was he likely to have done it when his life was not to be saved? Without proof, no assertion of this kind is to be believed. It is a serious calumny upon Orsini, and to be resented.

"Again you state that—'The Emperor learnt at Milan, from the mouth of his own couriers. . . . and especially of that confidential one whom we have repeatedly mentioned, and who brought to Milan the discouraging results of his interview with Orsini's friends, whom he had found deaf to Bonapartist suggestions.'

"No doubt they were found 'deaf.' Were they ever found at all? No such persons have ever been visited. A confidential agent of the Orsini party has been sent over the whole ground, each *capi* or chief of sections has been inquired of, and the answer of each is that no Bonapartist emissary nor any such pretended communication has ever reached them. The 'confidential one' whom the writer 'repeatedly mentioned' was M. Pietri.

"The *Westminster Review* has given too many proofs of its profound sympathy with Continental liberty, and for those who have given their lives to promote it, for the friends of Orsini to be under any other impression than that you have been mislead or misinformed of the facts of Felice Orsini's character and career.—Yours faithfully,

G. J. HOLYOAKE."

With his usual fairness and promptness the editor inserted this letter at the end of the next issue of the *Westminster Review*, regretting that he had inserted the communication, which he believed at the time to be trustworthy.

When in England Orsini was for many weeks the guest of a friend in the North, whose doors were always open to exiles. His daily habit was to ride through the country, and his fine figure and handsome resolute face was met by passengers as he galloped through splendid scenes and over sterile moors where the volcanoes of industry reminded him of those of his own brighter land.

When Madame Herwagh presented Orsini with white gloves,

he laid them aside to wear on the morning of his execution, although he was then free. He had so often been near death that he thought death always near him, and, as it was impossible for him to cease to conspire for the freedom of Italy, he regarded himself as destined to the scaffold. He had known the perils of prisons—he had mastered the language of stone walls—the language of misery—by which the last messages of the condemned are struck from cell to cell. When the last hour came and Pierri, who was with him, faltered, Orsini, not only undaunted but bright and daring as was his wont in danger, counselled Pierri to be of good courage and acquit himself as a patriot should.

## CHAPTER LXII.

### *A FRENCH JACOBIN IN LONDON.*

(1856.)

FROM 1851 to 1856 we had a real French Jacobin active in England, sprung like a Revolutionary Phœnix from the ashes of the Parisian clubs of 1793—Dr. Simon “Bernard le Clubiste,” as he signed himself in his first letter to *The Times*. Dr. Bernard was born in Carcasonne in 1817. A physician by education, he, as surgeon on board a man-of-war, displayed intrepidity in two or more sea battles. He was a Phalansterist of the school of Fourier. He edited insurgent papers, and was chairman of the club of the Bazaar *Bonne Nouvelle*, where he addressed five thousand people nightly. Unintimidated when his colleagues were shot, he carried the agitation to Belgium, and was soon in prison and on his trial there. He got into trouble about Robert Blum, the publisher, who was shot by the Austrians in Vienna. Eight prosecutions had spent their rage upon him, when in 1851 he came to England, and practised as a physician at 40, Regent Circus, Piccadilly, London. Before two years were well gone he was in Newgate. His knowledge of the physiology of elocution, in which he excelled, and of the cure of the impediments of speech, would soon have brought him fame and fortune. His skill in Belgium had brought him great renown. We who knew him, liked him for his simplicity, genuineness, and courage. Becoming involved in the Orsini affair, he was tried for his life at the Old Bailey, in London, and would have been condemned had it not been for the defiant spirit of a city of London jury, who would not convict any one at the bidding of a foreign power. Louis Napoleon, the

usurper, was understood to ask that Dr. Bernard should be put upon his trial, which was done. The case lasted five days. Edwin James, an advocate politically popular in his time, defended the doctor. I was in court, and heard with amazement his ornate appeal so materially destitute of facts. He was unacquainted with what he was supposed to know, or might have known—and should have known. The Attorney-General, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, who prosecuted, made it a point of horror that a letter from Orsini found in Dr. Bernard's room inquired "How about the Red and Co.," which the jury were told, with upturned eyes and uplifted hands, referred to the "Red Republic," for which the doctor and his terrific correspondent were plotting. All the while Orsini's letter merely inquired after a lady, the colour of whose hair he exaggerated because she had refused his offer to marry her. He always afterwards referred to the committee of which the lady was a member as the "Red and Co." Mr. Edwin James had no explanation to give. He had not inquired into the facts of the case which a question would have elicited. The Attorney-General Kelly was he who shed tears before the jury in attesting the innocence of the Quaker, Tawell, who had confessed to Kelly that he had murdered the woman at Berkhamstead, for which Tawell was hanged. From Sir Fitzroy, pious without scruples, Dr. Bernard had nothing to expect. Edwin James, his counsel, trusted entirely to the hereditary spirit of English defiance of foreign dictation, and modelled his appeal to the jury on the famous reply of Mirabeau to the message of the king. Fortunately for Dr. Bernard, this intrepid eloquence succeeded. Spoken in a loud, strong, imperious voice, the following is the passage which won, or justified, the verdict :—

"Gentlemen, I need not remind you that it has been of the greatest advantage to this country that her free shores have been open to exiles from other lands. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove to our shores the Saurins, the Romillys, and the Laboucheres, who have shed a lustre on this country. Will you, then, at the bidding of a neighbouring despot, destroy the asylum which aliens have hitherto enjoyed? Let me urge you to let the verdict be your own, uninfluenced by the ridiculous fears of French armaments or French invasions, such as

were raised in Peltier's case. You, gentlemen, will not be intimidated ; you will not pervert and wrest the law of England to please a foreign dictator ! No. Tell the prosecutor in this case that the jury-box is the sanctuary of English liberty. Tell him that on this spot your predecessors have resisted the arbitrary power of the Crown, backed by the influence of Crown-serving and time-serving judges. Tell him that under every difficulty and danger your predecessors have secured the political liberties of the people. Tell him that the verdicts of English juries are founded on the eternal and immutable principles of justice. Tell him that, panoplied in that armour, no threat of armament or invasion can awe you. Tell him that, though 600,000 French bayonets glittered before you, though the roar of French cannon thundered in your ears, you will return a verdict which your own breasts and consciences will sanctify and approve, careless whether that verdict pleases or displeases a foreign despot, or secures or shakes, and destroys for ever the throne which a tyrant has built upon the ruins of the liberty of a once free and mighty people."

Lord Campbell—one of those Whigs who apologise for their honourable sympathy with liberty by acts which Tories might covet, and then wonder why they are not popular—summed up for conviction. As the jury were about to retire, Dr. Bernard, lifting his hands and standing erect in the dock, exclaimed with great fervour, "I declare the words which have been used by the judge are not correct, and that the balls taken by George to Brussels were not those which were taken to Paris. I have brought no evidence here, because I am not accustomed to compromise any person. I declare that I am not the hirer of assassins, that Rudio has declared in Paris, on his trial, that he asked himself to go to Orsini. I was not the hirer of assassins. Of the blood of the victims of the 14th of January there is nothing on my heart any more than on any one here. We want only to crush despotism and tyranny everywhere. I have conspired—I will conspire everywhere—because it is my duty, my sacred duty, as of every one ; but never, never, will I be a murderer."

On the verdict of acquittal being given, men waved their hats, the members of the bar cheered, ladies stood on their seats and

waved their handkerchiefs or their bonnets, and cheered again, and again, the crowd outside catching indications of the nature of the verdict, sent back in still louder cheers, their greetings at the result.

"At length," says *The Times* reporter, "silence was restored, and Bernard, whose eye sparkled, and whose frame quivered with intense emotion, said, in a loud voice, "I do declare that this verdict is the truth, and it proves that in England there will be always liberty to crush tyranny. All honour to an English jury!"

Thus the great Jacobin escaped being hanged. Unhappily he came to a more lamentable end. A bewitching angelic traitor was sent as a spy to beguile him, and to her, in fatal confidence, he spoke of his friends. When he found that they were seized one by one and shot, he realized his irremediable error, lost his reason, and so died.

Dr. Bernard had every virtue save prudence. I observed with apprehension that he would talk in a loud voice in the streets, of things it were best to whisper with circumspection in private. It suggested itself to me that if I conspired it would be well to watch the ways of him I conspired with. Dr. Bernard had that fervour which made him imagine all the world had come to his opinion, and took the town into his confidence. Partly it was England that misled him, he could not imagine that spies were in English streets.

Edwin James was not a man of many scruples. When he was a candidate for Marylebone he spoke one day at the usual hustings at the Regent's Park end of Portland Place. His adversary put himself forward as a "Resident Candidate," when James exclaimed, "I may be one day a happy resident—but, alas! as yet I have no wife and family." "You old incubator," exclaimed a loud-mouthed and abrupt elector, "you have three families in the borough already, and you know it!" The "gentle Edwin" was not abashed, but laughed and spoke on. The electors knew when they voted for him that he would sell them if he could get a price for them, calculating that, if he could not, he would serve them well. In which they were right. Within twenty minutes of his entering the House of Commons after being declared duly elected, I heard him take part in a debate, and offer himself to Lord John Russell. But Lord John,

when the opportunity came to him, would not buy, and James remained a popular member—until Lord Yarborough gave him the choice of leaving England or being indicted here. He went to New York, where the enemies of the Republic said the bar had fewer scruples as to its associates. Edwin James found to the contrary. After many years banishment he returned to England. Re-admission at the bar being impossible, he began a new legal career, and kept terms in a solicitor's office, to come up for examination as a new candidate. I often met him walking to the city at an early hour, pale, sedate, unostentatious—his ruddiness, grossness, and pomposity gone out of him. I felt respect for his courage and perseverance. Death intervened, and he came to his end without attaining his purpose.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

### *THE STORY OF CARLO DE RUDIO.*

(1857-62.)

RUDIO—"Count Carlo de Rudio":<sup>1</sup> he called himself, but there was little of the "Count" about him—was an Italian, and one of the shell-bearers when Orsini and Pierri made their attack on the Emperor Louis Napoleon in Paris. Rudio bore a shell, but whether he threw it is doubtful. "He could not get near enough," he said. Though deported to Guiana for his reputed share in the transaction, he escaped, it was believed by connivance of the French authorities there. In a small boat he managed to reach the English colony of Berbice, and afterwards worked his passage to England. Dr. Bernard stated on his trial at the Old Bailey that Rudio came and was not sought. Why he came, or who sent him, demanded scrutiny by those who received him before employing him, or suffering his participation. He may have been impelled to join in the enterprize by patriotism, and afterwards have shrunk from the consequences. The *Daily Telegraph* of August 30, 1861, described him as one who "betrayed his confederates," and stated that "the revelations he made were of considerable help towards the prosecution of Dr. Bernard." The allusion must be to information given at the time of Rudio's own apprehension. Nothing transpired at Bernard's trial as to "revelations" made by him.

In England Rudio afterwards asked my advice and aid to bring out a Life of himself, of which some pretentious numbers

<sup>1</sup> I remember he traced his descent from Nosa Danus, whom the Emperor Otone the Great, in the ninth century, made Governor of Belluno.

appeared. Probably I published some numbers for him. He went about lecturing. At some places, as the *Telegraph* reported, he complained that he was underpaid for his expedition to Paris, and that "Dr. Bernard only gave him £14 and his railway ticket"; further, that "Mazzini refused to recommend him to the Revolutionary Committee." Making these statements looked like the act of a traitor. It was, as far as his word could go, fixing on Dr. Bernard a complicity of which he had been acquitted by a jury, and doing so in a form which no one had attempted to prove against him. Though Rudio's words did not affect Mazzini, who refused to recognize him, they served to give the public the impression that Rudio had a right to look to Mazzini as a patron. My wish was to decline any communication with Rudio, and I would have done so but for the request of a friend of Dr. Bernard, who, too generously commiserating Rudio's condition, besought me and also Mazzini to aid him.

Mazzini, always forgiving to his enemies, had pity for Rudio, because he was an Italian who had, peradventure, entered into conspiracy and peril for his country, and because he thought that probably fear had led him to betray others. At that time attempts were made in Parliament, and in the press of the governing classes, to connect Mazzini with every act of insurrection or outrage in Europe, as was afterwards done towards Mr. Parnell with respect to Ireland. Yet Mazzini incurred the peril of affording a colourable pretext for this imputation against him, as he had often done, from motives of humanity.

One of Rudio's letters to me was the following:—

"4, FELIX PLACE, BARKER GATE, NOTTINGHAM,  
"Feb. 16, 1861.

"DEAR SIR,—I have received a letter from your friend, —, which tells me that you offer yourself to help me in my publication. Of course my letter is to let you know that my publication cannot go further for the want of pecuniary means, and I am obliged to leave off, as I have resolved to leave this town and go elsewhere, where I hope I shall find means of subsistence for myself and my poor unhappy family. But, as I am without the most necessary means of carrying out my views, I will take the liberty to make you an offer; and that would be

to sell you the copywrite of my pamphlet, leaving at your consciousness the value of it. I assure you, dear sir, that no man of my condition has more suffered than I, in this last few months especially. Many a day we have been without any thing to eat—without coal to warm us; twice some propositions very brilliant has been offered to me; but them was brilliant to those that have another heart than mine. With strength of mind I have rejected them, and preferred to suffer than become a spy. To you, then, I appeal as a man of religious and political principles equally to those that I am proud to have; no, sir, no human power shall have the chance of turning me out of that path that I have been for twelve years. Death only shall put a stop at my principles, but until I shall have a drop of blood in my veins I shall always be ready to run against the danger for the benefit of our noble cause, though I have been repayed with the blackest of ingratitude. Still I will pessever while my heart still beats within me, and the taske I have undertaken is unaccomplished. Hoping of a reply, I with my wife and child, send our best expression of gratitude, and believe me, Dear Sir, your truly and fellowman,

“C. CARLO DE RUDIO.

“P.S.—I hope you will excuse my bad styl of the English language; I have a great presentiment, ‘and that is only the aliment that keeps me a life,’ that I shall no longer stay without that my person will again be sacrificed for the great principle of patriotism, liberty, and honour.”

This letter, creditably written for one in humble society who had taught himself, had the fault of protesting his fidelity to one who did not question it, nor believe it. Interest in the American Civil War led Rudio to wish to go to that country. By that time he had his English wife, whom he married at Nottingham, and two children. He wrote to me, January 13, 1864, saying, “Mr. Bradlaugh had promised him aid,” and Rudio entreated me for more. I had sent him £6 on the second of that month (as I see from the cheque before me). The following letter to me relates to these affairs :—

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall be very grateful for all that you will do with W. to help our collecting. I did most unhappily

give to Rudio the £1. But if £1 shall be wanted for his going, you may reckon on another one from me. It will be economy too, for if he remains I shall have to help him often.—Ever faithfully yours,

JOSEPH MAZZINI."

At length the means for a voyage were collected, and I gave Rudio a warm poncho to protect him from the cold at sea. At that time I was expecting daily apprehension for selling un-stamped papers at Fleet Street, and this poncho, as I have said, was kept under the counter with biscuits and a small flask of *eau de vie*. I had had experience of apprehension, and knew the value of warmth and refreshment the first night. As Rudio was leaving me, I thought this would protect him from the Atlantic blasts. Whether he perished in the war, or on which side he fought, I never heard, nor have I heard of him since.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

### *STABBING SPIES IN LONDON.*

(1857.)

DESPOTISM is the nursing mother of murder. It employs spies to betray patriots to the scaffold. The friends of liberty have often no choice but to conspire and kill in self-defence. Sometimes these desperate feuds, originating in Naples or St. Petersburg, in Berlin or Paris, were fought out in London.

One day an announcement appeared in the London papers that a young Italian, on patriotic duty, had stabbed four foreigners in a restaurant in Panton Street, Haymarket. They were all seriously wounded by thrusts which had the vigour of assassination in them. It was a miracle none were killed. They were conveyed to an hospital, and the active assailant, who had attacked them with such invincible rapidity that they were unable to detain him, was "wanted" by the police. The question was put to me whether I would provide for him. I readily agreed to do so, as I held a house convenient for that purpose. The back rooms overlooked open-gate grounds, and I could watch the arrival of the police in that direction if they made a descent in the rear. So if they came at the back, I could let my active guest out at the front—if they came at the front, he could escape at the back. If they came both ways at once, I had an apartment at the lower end of the garden, and as soon as they had passed over him to enter the house, a signal would enable him to leap into adjacent gardens before they could be aware of the movement. I had information that my guest would probably refuse to be taken alive, and a desperate encounter would have caused alarm in my family, in which there

was illness. As a guarantee against this could not be given, other arrangements were made for the determined visitor. Afterwards I much regretted having made the inquiry as to his intended resistance, as he was not brought to me, and I lost the pleasure of succouring so alert and brave a man, for whose safety I had matured preparations. The four wounded men were foreign spies supposed to be in the pay of the Emperor Napoleon, and mouchardism is a profession we did not recognise in London.

When the men in the hospital recovered, they went their way. They knew very well who their assailant was, but would never tell, nor could the police induce them to appear before the magistrates and make any charge. They had sufficing reasons for not allowing their own identity, or the nature of their business, or the name of their employer, to be known, and the fourfold attempted assassinations in Panton Street consequently passed out of the memory of London. Their intrepid assailant knew the spies very well. He had tracked them to their lair, and fallen upon them with almost superhuman fury. He kept his own counsel, and no one who knew it spoke his name. The contest had to be renewed elsewhere—at another time. The terrible silence of the perilous enterprise was never broken.

## CHAPTER LXV.

### *PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE IN THE TOWER HAMLETS.*

(1857.)

It was in 1857 that I first became a Parliamentary candidate. It was in opposition to Sir William Clay, who had for twenty-four years represented the Tower Hamlets, but who was regarded as a stationary Liberal.

Eleven years later (1868)—never being impatient—I addressed the electors of my native town, Birmingham. Fifteen years afterwards, in 1884, I was a candidate at Leicester, on the retirement of Mr. P. A. Taylor. My object this time was to promote the passing of an Affirmation Bill for members of Parliament, which would open the doors of the House to all persons who found the ecclesiastical terms of the oath not in accordance with their personal belief. As I should on this ground have refused to take the oath, I might have aided the cause of affirmation had I been supported by a constituency whose self-respect lay in the same direction. But that was not to be. On addressing a public meeting at Leicester, twenty-nine questions were put to me. Nine of them were still-born, were ideal and impracticable, and never had working life in them. The other twenty I had invented myself or advocated being put to candidates years ago when in Leicester, before the questioners were out of their cradles. The answers therefore were easy to me.

My candidature in the Tower Hamlets was the first claim ever made to represent labour in Parliament; and it was the first time Mr. Mill supported such an intention. It was at

my request that Mr. Mill's subscription of £10 was not made public, as I knew his generosity would do him more harm than it would do me good. Mr. Mill would have accepted the consequences, but it was not for me who profited by his friendship to impose the risk upon him. Some years later, when he sought to re-enter Parliament for Westminster, it was reported that he had, at the same time, given a subscription to support the candidature of Mr. Bradlaugh at Northampton, as little popular as myself—and it cost Mr. Mill his seat.

My Committee Room was at 4, West Street, Cambridge Heath, N.E., and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was one of my committee. My address to the constituency was the following, which shows the questions in the minds of those regarded as "advanced" Reformers of that day :—

"GENTLEMEN,—During sixteen years in which I have been engaged in the public advocacy of Industrial and Religious Reforms, I have only been solicitous to be of service. The last prosecution in this country for the independent expression of theological opinion was sustained by me. I was the last person against whom the Queen's Exchequer Writ was issued for the part taken in securing the Repeal of the Newspaper Stamp, and but for the risks thus incurred the public might still be struggling with that question. I have constantly helped public movements, not the less when those who accepted my services thought it well not to acknowledge them—the rule of modern political life being to ignore those who do the work lest you should discourage those who never do anything. In all this I have acquiesced, because it is the first duty of a publicist to help without permitting any personal consideration to hamper the public cause.

"I should vote for Residential Suffrage; and the Ballot, which would make it honest; and for Triennial Parliaments, which would make it a power; and for Equal Electoral Districts, which would make it just. A public opinion which can only make itself heard in the streets, and cannot reach the Cabinet, is impotent. In the late war the only character that stood the test was the character of the people. When aristocratic administrators failed, the people were efficient. Therefore, if English honour was safe in the hands of the common soldier

in the bloody defiles of Inkermann, it may equally be trusted to the common people at the polling booth.

"First among social improvements is the measure introduced by Sir Erskine Perry for giving, under just conditions, married women an independent right to their property and earnings.

"Next is the demand that the State should establish well-devised Home Colonies upon the waste lands of the Crown, which might eventually extinguish pauperism—home colonies where the labourer in distress, instead of taking his wallet for the parish loaf, need only take his spade to dig his honest bread—home colonies which should be training schools of emigrants, who might leave England not as now so often to perish helplessly out of our sight, but as qualified to support themselves as agricultural experience alone can enable them to do.

"In this country there is a decided element of active and progressive opinion, systematically denied recognition ; and which is misjudged, because never legitimately represented. This is nowhere more evident than in the Tower Hamlets.

"There wants more than the abolition of Church Rates. All religious endowments are but a tax imposed by the strong upon the consciences of the weaker party.

"Then why should a Christian State accept the credit of the Rothschild House, and refuse Parliamentary position to a member of the family ; and where is the religious equality in a State which admits the Catholic and excludes the Jew ? Religious liberty is not in half the danger from the Chief Rabbi that it is from the Pope.

"Public justice requires that the oath, like marriage, should be a civil or religious rite, at the option of those concerned. Without a law of Affirmation in favour of those who conscientiously object to the oath as now administered, the magistrate is made a judge of religious opinion, and awards to unscrupulous consciences advantages denied to veracity.

"In this country, where the mass of the people are so hard worked, Sunday recreation is both a necessity and a mercy, and, where it can be accompanied by instruction, it is also a moral improvement. Hence I should support the opening of the Crystal Palace, the National Gallery, the British Museum, and similar places on the Sunday afternoon. Since nonconformity of creed is permitted among us, uniformity of conduct should

not be enforced by Act of Parliament. The poor man who is a slave to-day and a pauper to-morrow should not be dictated to as to how he shall spend the only day which is his: whether in seeking the fresh air from which he has been six days excluded, or in affording instructive enjoyment to his family. To deny him this humble freedom is surely the worst of the insolences of opinion.

“All progress is a growth, not an invention. Legislation can do little more than enable the people to help themselves. But this help, given with a personal knowledge of their wants, and in a spirit free from the temerity which would precipitate society on an unknown future, and free from the cowardice which is afraid to advance at all, may do much.—I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

“147, Fleet Street, March 23, 1857.”

Looking at this address with its manifold proposals so long before their day, the reader will not wonder at my not being elected.

Mr. Acton Smee Ayrton was popular in the Tower Hamlets because he promised more thoroughness in Liberalism than Sir William Clay, who was a gentleman of fine manners and fixed principles—fixed also in the sense of not moving forwards, and this made many electors wish for a member capable of progress. Mr. Ayrton’s election was uncertain, my candidature could not be successful, but by persisting in it I might imperil his chances; so I wrote to him to the effect that I would retire and advise my friends to vote for him. At midnight he wrote me a grateful letter of acknowledgment.

On the day of the declaration of the poll, I was on the platform. Mr. Ayrton was not only hoarse, but his voice had that vinous impediment of utterance that Lord Garlies manifested when addressing the House of Commons on the Disabilities of Women, or Viscount Royston’s when he spoke upon the Game Laws late at night. The returning officer, seeing Mr. Ayrton’s distress, with kindly consideration procured an orange, no easy thing to get on that crowded platform, and handed it to Mr. Ayrton, saying—“Here, sir, try an orange, it may relieve you.” A Tower Hamlets election mob thirty years ago was not a very dainty crowd, but they had an instinct for an act of public

courtesy, and cheered the returning officer who showed it. To their astonishment Mr. Ayrton tossed the orange back into the giver's face, saying, with incredible rudeness, "I want no orange! That's what they offer people when they are going to be hanged"—accusing the returning officer of treating him as a culprit. The remark was probably meant to be a witticism, and the speaker looked to the audience as though he expected the crowd would laugh. Their astonished silence did them credit. The returning officer never offered any more oranges to distressed members elect, but left them to roar unrelieved.

At the end there was a cry among some of the electors for me to speak. The majority of the crowd refused to hear anybody speak but Mr. Ayrton, and the returning officer, who was courteous to every one, said to him, "They will hear you; just speak to them, and procure Mr. Holyoake a hearing." Though he had so recently written to me a letter of thanks for having contributed to his success, he turned away, and refused compliance with the request. As his election was assured, nothing could harm him further. But civility was contrary to his nature, nor could the obligation of gratitude reconcile him to it. The habit of offensiveness never forsook him. When he became the Right Hon. Commissioner of Works, he was always throwing the orange in somebody's face.

Mr Ayrton came into St. James's Hall after the great Radical procession to Hyde Park, and reproached the Queen for not being present in the Mall to see it pass. Mr. Ayrton himself was not there. It was then Mr. Bright arose and made his famous defence of the Queen. The Board of Works, of which Mr. Ayrton became Commissioner, suggests familiarity with scaffold poles, excavations, and brick carts, and Mr. Ayrton's manners were in keeping. He addressed Mr. Barry, the architect of the House of Commons, as though he were a jerry builder, and he compared Sir Joseph Hooker, the great botanical professor at Kew, to a "market gardener." These uncivil outrages cost Mr. Ayrton his seat at the Tower Hamlets, and I own to feeling gratification when discomfiture befel him. His unpopularity excluded him from Parliament ever after.

Long before his death I aided in promoting his return to the House of Commons by writing words to his advantage, where they were likely to be influential (in the *Nineteenth Century*) :

because, though manners are much in politics, principle is more, and Mr. Ayrton had principles to which, in his offensive way, he was true. The interest of the public service required that the architects' accounts and the Kew Gardens accounts should be audited by the Board of Works. Mr. Ayrton was an honest minister, and he encountered hostility enough on this ground without augmenting it by ill taste. It was to his credit that he opposed every system of centralisation, aided the repeal of the taxes upon knowledge, and procured the extinction of the editorial sureties. He had the credit when in the House of being the only member who read every bill brought in. He knew all that was attempted, and if he sometimes made mischief he stopped much. I ought also to mention that it was Mr. Ayrton who, finding in the archives of his office my suggestion made to Lord John Manners to have a light on the Clock Tower, put it up.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

### *A LONDON REVOLUTION.*

(1858.)

THIRTY-THREE years have elapsed since the parcel of papers and placards relating to the “Anti-Conspiracy Bill Committee” of 1858 (which were for the first time untied February 21, 1891) were laid aside. Most of those who took part in the agitation, which overthrew Lord Palmerston at that time, are now dead. Of Parliamentary men, Bright, Byng, Baines, Cobden, Disraeli, Gibson, Gilpin, Roebuck, Lord John Russell, Sir John Shelley ; of members of the Committee, Mr. Ashurst, Mr. Shaen, Col. A. B. Richards, Mr. Richardson, and Mr Mackintosh have all died.

Few persons of the general public now have any definite idea of what took place in London in the third week in February, 1858. After the attempt of Orsini to kill the Emperor of the French in Paris, it was believed the Government would be asked to, and would, give up Dr. Bernard and another London citizen, reputedly associated with him. Some French colonels who happened to be in Paris at the time made warlike and menacing speeches, expressive of their readiness to come to London and fetch Dr. Bernard to be disposed of in Paris. This was an outrage upon the Queen, as it proclaimed a hostile invasion of her capital ; but the Emperor of the French did not cause to be introduced into the French Parliament any bill to deal with these belligerent and compromising colonels. On the contrary, he directed Count Walewski to bring a charge against the English Government of “sheltering assassins and actually favouring their designs.” Lord Palmerston, a friend

of Louis Napoleon, who connived at and encouraged his usurpation, made no reply to this insolent despatch, but brought in a bill to call foreigners to account who in this country conspired against a friendly government abroad. The bill was reasonable, but untimely. Being brought in immediately after Walewski's despatch, it gave the people of England the impression that we were going to alter our laws, or make laws, at the dictation of a foreign Power. To this Englishmen never consent. Neither Radical, Whig, Tory, nor Quaker would countenance this un-English proceeding. Then I witnessed the only peremptory revolution occurring in England in my time, of which I saw the beginning and the end.

Lord Palmerston brought in his Conspiracy Bill, and the House of Commons passed the first reading. The next day, Mr. W. H. Ashurst, Mr. James Stansfeld, Mr. P. A. Taylor, Sir John Bennett, and Mr. Shaen, subscribed £5 each; Colonel A. B. Richards, George Leverson, Alderman Healey of Rochdale, Mr. John Mackintosh, and Mr. Connell subscribed lesser amounts; and I see, on the list made at the time, the name of C. Bradlaugh for 5s., of which he had very few in those days.

On Saturday afternoon it was resolved to call a meeting for Monday night, in the Freemason's Hall, though the intimation of it, owing to shortness of time, could only be given by word of mouth to political societies. On Monday, a meeting was held in the Secular Room at my house, 147, Fleet Street. Mr. W. H. Ashurst, Mr. W. Shaen, Mr. J. Stansfeld, Colonel Richards (a Conservative, and then editor of the *Morning Advertiser*), Mr. John Mackintosh, Mr. J. B. Langley, Mr. George Leverson, Mr. Connell, and others were present. I was asked to take the chair, and a committee was appointed of those present, with power to add to their number. Funds were to be collected, and I was elected treasurer. A demonstration was projected, if it could be brought about, to be held in Hyde Park on Sunday.

On Monday evening, when we arrived, the Freemasons' Hall was so crowded that the conveners of the meeting were unable to get in. Mr. Stansfeld spoke to the manager of the hall, who conducted us through the wine cellars to a private passage that led on to the platform. In a small gallery on the opposite side of the hall, fronting the platform, were two French spies,

disguised as gasfitters—assumed to be placed there by the manager in case their services should be required. They were admitted in the interests of the French Emperor. There were no foreigners on the platform, nor were they observable in the meeting. It was an English meeting called to consider an English question. The variety and excitement of the audience, who knew not who had called them together, was metropolitan, and we saw that the question was in the hands of the people. It then occurred to the leaders on the platform that they might proceed to call a public meeting in Hyde Park on the following Sunday, where the people of London could assemble to give their opinion on the steps taken by the Government concerning the honour and reputation of the country. We had objections to holding political meetings in Hyde Park on the Sunday except on a great national emergency, when the voice of London required to be heard. Owing to business pursuits, the people in imposing numbers could be assembled on no other day. It was thought that the occasion justified a Sunday meeting in the Park, and I was asked to announce it. The audience in the hall was tumultuous, and, fearing I might not speak with sufficient loudness for every one to hear, I asked several gentlemen to make the announcement for me. They, however, proved unwilling to take the responsibility of it. I explained that the committee took that onus, and merely wanted to borrow a voice. Mr. Mackintosh, who wrote as "Northumbrian" in *Reynolds's Newspaper*, who had been a schoolmaster, and had stentorian lungs, finally complied with my request. For a time he demurred; but on my saying "Use my name, and say you give the notice at my request," he consented. The committee desired notice given to that meeting, as there were not sufficient funds to make known to the whole of London their intention.

From the way in which the announcement was received, there was no doubt those present would extend the publicity of it. At eleven o'clock on that Monday night it was a matter of doubt if London could be interested in the protest against the proposed bill. Yet on the following Friday morning all London was in the streets. I never knew London change so in a few days. Not one shopkeeper in a hundred takes any part in public affairs. Probably not one man in a thousand of

the four millions of population can be counted upon to appear in public agitation ; yet on that Friday morning the shopkeepers in Oxford Street, from Holborn to the Marble Arch, were at their doors conversing with passers-by, and discussing the motion of which Mr. Milner Gibson had given notice for the rejection of Lord Palmerston's Bill. The first reading of that bill had been carried by the enormous majority of 200. To destroy that majority in a week was an unusual undertaking. The Government were not merely confident—they were jubilant. Mr. Baxter Langley placed his office in 3, Falcon Court, at our disposal for placard purposes ; and the committee, at 147, Fleet Street, issued the following circular to known publicists, societies, and clubs in town and country, for none of us expected that success would come so swiftly as it did :—

“ You are urgently requested to co-operate with the great movement which has commenced with the meeting at the Freemasons' Tavern on Monday night, for the purpose of opposing, by all legal means, the iniquitous Act of Lord Palmerston, called the Conspiracy to Murder Bill. We shall be happy to receive delegates from the provinces to appear at our public meetings in London, and we beg to impress upon you the value of haste, in order that support may be given to those members of Parliament who have voted against the bill, and that the supporters of Palmerston may receive a warning from their constituencies that if their votes be repeated they will lose their seats. We intend now to hold meeting upon meeting, as rapidly as possible, in every quarter, in order to elicit from the people and the press a full expression of the wide and deep feeling of disgust which pervades the public mind in London.”

We need not have been so solicitous. Resentment at foreign interference we found to be instinctive in the English heart. In the meantime we issued placards. The longest, which follows, was drafted by Colonel Richards :—

#### “ THE PEOPLE OF LONDON

will meet in Hyde Park on Sunday next, the 21st February, at 3 o'clock p.m., to protest by their peaceable and orderly presence

against the new Conspiracy Bill, introduced by Lord Palmerston under the dictation of the French Emperor, Louis Napoleon.

"Think of your countryman, the Engineer Watts, driven mad at Naples.

"Think of the insults of the French colonels.

"Are Foreign Spies and Police to be allowed to act on British Soil ?

"Let those who attend in Hyde Park on Sunday next  
*Maintain perfect order.*

"By order of the Freemasons' Hall Meeting Committee."

The next two were written by me :—

"ENGLISHMEN,

"On Monday, at Bow Street, an English magistrate presided at a political trial, under the surveillance of French Police Agents. Sir Richard Mayne sat on one hand, and a French Agent on the other. Is it come to this in London ?

"Keep the Peace.

Attend at Hyde Park,

"Break no Law.

On Sunday, at 3 o'clock.

"Beware of all who attempt it."

The second was as follows :—

"MEN OF LONDON,

"Lord John Russell has said that, whoever may vote for Lord Palmerston's Bill, dictated by the French Government, 'that shame and humiliation he will not share.'

"Let all who would not share it either be present in Hyde Park on Sunday, at 3 o'clock."

Another placard was a passage from *The Times*, not complimentary to Lord Palmerston. We did not know then that *The Times* attacked him in the interests of despots :—

"It is impossible to mention a spot from the Tagus to the Dardanelles, from Sicily to the North Cape, where Lord Palmerston has founded one solid tangible claim to our gratitude and confidence. We will not measure him as a Russian

Minister, or an Austrian Minister, or a French Minister, because, if we do, we must admit that he has given Russia a plea for successful aggrandisement ; that he has helped to aggravate and confirm the Austrian dominion in Italy, rend her influences in Germany ; and that he may even claim a share in the honour in making France what it is. He has played the game of our national rivals and political antagonists, or, to borrow a sentence from Mr. Osborne, he has merged into a tool and automaton whose hands have been directed, and whose moves have been made, by the will and unseen influence of a foreign prompter. There is no constituted authority in Europe with which Lord Palmerston has not quarrelled ; there is no insurrection that he has not betrayed. The ardent partizans of Sicilian, Italian, and Hungarian independence have certainly no special cause for gratitude to a minister who gave them an abundance of verbal encouragements and then abandoned them to their fate."

—*The Times*, June, 1850.

There was another side to Palmerston's character. He expressed more sympathy with "struggling nationalities" than any other foreign Minister of his day, which, from one in his position, was an advantage to them. Foreign leaders in some cases expected military aid to follow, and in their disappointment condemned him for not doing what he had not promised. Lord Palmerston must have had good in him and have done some, since every despotic government abroad, save Louis Napoleon's, detested him. We next placarded Lord John Russell's famous speech against the Conspiracy Bill.

"'The threat (of France) has been somewhat too barely exposed, somewhat too loudly uttered ; it has been so uttered that I confess if I were to vote for this bill I should feel shame and humiliation in giving that vote. Let those who will support the bill of the Government ; that *shame* and *humiliation* I am determined not to share.' (Tuesday, February 9, 1858.)"

We enjoined order on every placard and suspicion of all who did not observe it. London was overrun by foreign spies, and is, indeed, never free from them. "Ignorant men, strangers

to public affairs, accuse in general the police of itself fabricating the plots which it discovers." Thiers said this, and his word has to be taken into account, as he had had great State experience. The police are often accused in this matter wrongfully ; but experience also shows that they are at times accused rightfully. They have invented plots in England, as they do in Ireland to this day. There are always "fool friends" of progress who commit the cause quite enough without police plots.

We issued smaller bills for shop windows and for hand to hand circulation.

"Will you submit to surrender your rights and liberties at the demand of a Foreign Sovereign ? If not—if you have still the same spirit your fathers had—attend in Hyde Park to protest against Lord Palmerston's Conspiracy Bill dictated by the French Government."

A meeting of delegates from England and Scotland was assembled in London then. Mr. Alderman Livesey, of Rochdale (a school-fellow of John Bright), presided, and made the most British speech delivered from any platform at that time. At this meeting I moved a petition to Parliament which set forth that no foreign prince ought to have power or jurisdiction in this realm, and that the "French Colonels' Bill"—as it had become to be called—was unnecessary, impolitic, and humiliating to the British nation. On receiving the petition, Lord John Russell wrote to me from Chesham Place saying he should have pleasure in presenting it.

Our meeting at the Freemasons' Hall was held on Monday night, February 16. On Friday, in the same week, Mr. Milner Gibson moved the rejection of the bill by an amendment drawn, as the press of the day said, "with his consummate skill." Mr. Walpole spoke against the bill, and so did Mr. Byng. Mr. Gladstone, too, made a speech against it, which Mr. Byng—a very good judge—said "excelled the finest efforts of Burke or Fox." Sir Robert Peel made against it the most sustained and dramatic speech he had delivered in the House. The Government had employed a Mr. Bodkin to prosecute Dr. Bernard. The way in which Sir Robert pronounced "Lawyer

Bodkin" filled the House with laughter. That night every Liberal speaker seemed nationalized. Though only one public meeting had been held and one Hyde Park meeting arranged, the excitement of the country had taken possession of the House. I have witnessed many great debates in Parliament, but I never saw the same vehemence and national spirit as was displayed from eleven o'clock till twenty minutes past two o'clock on Saturday morning. I saw the proceedings from the Reporters' Gallery. Those who think Mr. Gladstone cannot speak with directness, compression, and economy of words, should have heard his speech that night. Lord Palmerston was never less happy or less relevant. His voice was thick and halting, as though he foresaw defeat. When the division came, the 200 majority of the Government changed sides or vanished, and, instead, a majority of 19 was recorded against the "Colonels' Bill." Hats were waved (an unusual thing in the House then) when the announcement was made. The lobbies were crowded, and Palace Yard contained a large throng of publicists and patriots waiting to learn the decision. They went huzzaing along the streets, and people leaned out of their bedroom windows to learn and cheer the good tidings.

A Cabinet Council was held the next afternoon, and the Government resigned. From an early hour we were busy endeavouring to undo what we had been energetically doing—namely, to prevent the meeting we had called in Hyde Park. The Government being overthrown, and the "Colonels' Bill" dead, we wished to save London from tumult. We therefore issued the two following announcements:—

1. "The committee of the Freemasons' Hall meeting, who have been making arrangements for a great open-air demonstration in Hyde Park on Sunday, have resolved on abandoning such meeting in consequence of the defeat of Lord Palmerston's Conspiracy Bill by the House of Commons on Friday night."

2. "This morning a deputation from the committee for arranging the Hyde Park meeting waited upon Sir Richard Mayne to obtain his advice as to the best means of preventing the public inconvenience from the announced meeting."

We spent more money on the Saturday and Sunday to

prevent an assemblage in the Park than we had spent all the week. We had notices of abandonment of the meeting posted at all points indicated by the police, where they would meet the eye of the East End throngs who might set out to the Park. However, the people went all the same, and it was computed that 200,000 were present on the Sunday afternoon, who came to rejoice instead of to protest.

There were some cases of disorder before the courts the next day, when the London magistrates were offensive and brutal to the people, as they usually are when political issues arise. Some cases of pocket-picking occurred, as they do even at the Lord Mayor's Show. Mr. Beadon, the Marlborough Street magistrate, said the committee who brought the people together were "morally as guilty as the pickpockets." Calling upon the public to meet in defence of national honour is legal, and it was the duty of the magistrate to aid the committee on asserting that right, and to punish and denounce only those who abuse a public right. But London magistrates acted otherwise. The police authorities well knew that the committee kept on legal lines. We had nothing to conceal. I sent to Sir Richard Mayne and the Home Secretary copies of all placards and circulars the moment they were issued. We had no idea that a vast meeting would result from any appeal we could make. It was well for us the bill was defeated, or London in still greater numbers would have been in the Park, and the excitement would have been beyond our control. But for that the Government alone would have been "morally" responsible.

The most memorable contribution to the agitation was the following brilliant answer to Louis Napoleon by Walter Savage Landor. The French Government described England as "a den of assassins." The poet published in the *Daily News* this "Reply from the 'Den'" :—

" We encourage assassins ! Sir ! Have no fear,  
No hold has the murderer or sympathies here :  
England loathes an assassin, and loathes him no less  
Whether shameful by failure or great by success—  
Whether hiding from sight, or set high on a throne—  
Whether killer of thousands, or killer of one—  
Whether bribe or revenge, or the hope of a name,  
Or the dream of a 'Destiny' 'damn him to fame.'  
Whatever the prompting, whatever the end,  
Has he slaughtered a people he swore to defend :

Has he banded with ruffians, like him, to strike  
At a brother assassin—we loathe him alike !

E'en where, Cain-like, by Providence guarded from ill,  
With a mark set upon him that no man may kill ;  
Where prosperity seems all his projects to crown,  
We've no faith in his Favour—no fear of his Frown :  
Undismayed by his Fortunes—unawed by his Fate,  
We smile at his ' Destiny '—WATCH him and WAIT."

People did so—and saw the dynasty of the Usurper go down  
under the sword of Germany and the assegai of a Zulu.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### *MURDER AS A MODE OF PROGRESS.*

(1859.)

MY experience at one time made me a connoisseur in assassination—a question often defended but seldom discussed in a practical way. Unconsidered applause on one hand and un-instructive reprobation on the other, are all that meet the public ear. Professor Tyndall made a notable contribution to physical science, entitled “Heat a Mode of Motion.” It is not less useful in political science to consider the question of “Murder as a Mode of Progress.” If the theory of political murder were understood, it would not command many followers. Yet, in consequence of its being treated as a suppressed question, it has for many persons the enchantment which belongs to the “forbidden.”

Intelligence may be revolutionary, but ignorance, especially if it be hungry, always is. Its impulse is change by force—its reason a sense of unendurable wrong. It has no plan—its future is only a day or a week, yet retaliation as a remedy is far from being the doctrine of the ferocious. I have known persons of real tenderness and sympathy, and for whose humanity I could unhesitatingly answer, who yet have had a reserve of sanguinary principles for advancing political progress. Those who look to see not what they expect to see, but what is to be seen, will find that a Government which upholds its authority by the discriminate killing of adversaries, accepts itself the principle of progress by murder. Seeing this, persons of strong purpose whom I have known come to think that the oppressed may use the same means. Despotism being mere force, wielded

by irresponsible will, tyrant killing, undertaken for public ends, with a view to temper or suppress despotism, is *not* regarded by moralists as murder. It is apparently a necessity of progress *there* and at that stage only, and is only defensible when done under such circumstances that armed resistance cannot be reasonably attempted. Where the justification of irremediable oppression does not exist, tyrant-killing is a mistake.

It is admitted now that the old theory of kingship is worn out. Formerly a man was regarded as a lawful ruler who reigned by what he called "divine right." Since representative government began, a king is regarded as a despot unless he reigns by Parliamentary right. A ruler may be good or bad, but he is still a despot if he rules by his own authority, or prevents any one else ruling by public appointment. If he be a good ruler, he is called "Paternal"—if bad, he is called a "Tyrant." But in both characters he is a despot. Force used without public consent officially expressed, is tyranny, and he who employs it is a tyrant, whether his purpose be good or evil. Mankind are prone to be enslaved, and are generally content so long as they are enslaved pleasantly. If a succession of good kings could be secured, paternal government would be eternal. The indolence of mankind would never attempt the honourable trouble of self-government. Therefore the good tyrants are seldom attacked. Yet they render manliness and progress impossible. Every man who seeks self-government himself, or seeks it for his countrymen, is a judge and adversary of him who renders it impossible. Nevertheless the good despot who rules justly cannot be usefully killed, since one cannot be sure that an untried government, introduced by force, could rule better than he. Self-government is justified as offering greater security for peace and wider progress, and cannot consistently be begun by blood. But the base ruler, whose power is personal and regulated by his own will for his own ends, and not by public law for the public good, is the enemy of an intelligent people: and if he withstand by force the advocacy of liberty, the law of progress exposes him, like a beast of prey, to be destroyed when met. Despotic rulers know this well.

The doctrine of tyrant killing is not a doctrine of the people merely: it has been accepted by kings as well as peoples.

Silas Titus was accorded a colonelcy under Charles II., because he had published a pamphlet of deadly purport against the chief ruler—the Lord Protector Cromwell. The English Tories favoured the assassination of Napoleon I., and he in his turn pensioned a man who meditated the assassination of the Duke of Wellington. Charlotte Corday's knife was applauded by the monarchs of France. Royalist assassins always abound. Lord Beaconsfield in a famous triplet—"Blessed the hand that wields the regicidal steel." Mr. Froude shows that Catholics and Protestants have alike approved tyrannicide and used it. The doctrine is not confined to the class of "agitators." Governments hold the doctrine and act upon it. They often cause persons to be put to death on principle. They have often held it to be good policy to kill a few popular leaders in order to strike terror into their followers. Carlyle favoured this policy, Governor Eyre put it in practice in Jamaica, and he found Canon Kingsley (just minded as he was in most things) and men more eminent than he came forward to approve it.

Four things seem necessary in him who assumes to act by his single hand as the agent of a nation :

1. That the tyrannicide must have intelligence sufficient to understand the responsibility of setting himself up as the redresser of a nation. If set upon the work by others he is a tool, or secondhand operator—an instrument in the hands of others ; a bravo rather than a self-determined patriot.

2. He who proposes to take a life for the good of the people must at least be prepared to give his own if necessary—both as atonement for taking upon himself the office of public avenger and to secure that his example shall not generate other than equally disinterested imitators. The many failures of tyrannicidal attempts have been mainly owing to the precaution taken by the actors for their own safety, and who end by bestowing upon the tyrant the reputation of "bearing a charmed life," when retaliatory oppression is brought upon others. Colonel Titus, the royalist pamphleteer who wrote "Killing no Murder," which advised that some one should put Cromwell to death, was without pretension to the dignity of a tyrannicide, since he was a mere inciter of assassination which somebody else was to take the risk of committing.

3. The adversary of the despot must not be weak, vacillating,

or likely to lose his head in unforeseen circumstances, nor be deficient in the knowledge and skill needful for his purpose. Without these qualities he should keep clear of an undertaking where failure will prove dangerous to those he professes to free.

4. He should have good knowledge that the result intended is likely to come to pass afterwards. History tells us how many noble men have been sacrificed ; how many a holy cause has been put back for years, or for centuries even, by untimely self-sacrifice. Curtius would have been an idiot if he had leaped into the gulph before he was well-assured that doing so would close it.

If tyrannicide is to be approved as a policy the business of the despot-ender should be an art, and praise should be given under conditions. The public avenger is one who aspires to the foremost place which patriotism can occupy. He, by his single hand, is the deliverer of a nation from an overshadowing terror and danger. He voluntarily accepts supreme peril that his country may escape it. More disinterested than the hero who perishes in battle, where he has chances of escape, he ranks with the martyr who gives up his life for the freedom of others. For him we change the dread epithet of "murderer" and call him by the proud name of "Avenger of the People." He should be no mean man for whom we do this.

In days when men were wanted for forlorn hopes, I received letters from persons whom I knew and could trust, offering to engage in any work involving death which I might command. I could not advise where I took no risk. The decision I left to them when they knew the circumstances of the occasion : and the higher the ideal of duty and peril in their minds the less likely they were to act heedlessly or needlessly.

Once I was asked to meet a number of ladies, two or three were wives of members of Parliament. Politics interested them, and they had capacity for public affairs. They asked my opinion upon tyrant killing, which they favoured, and there were elsewhere many ready to act upon their sanction. I answered that "at the time preceding the French Revolution many ladies held the same opinion, and if these English ladies spread the doctrine with the same fervour and had the same influence, they would assuredly share the same fate. For myself, I had not made up my mind that murder was a mode of progress."

I saw that character of the doctrine had not occurred to them, nor that it was a doctrine that may have unpleasant adherents. "Disciples," I said, "might arise of more advanced views than their own, and who might, in the interests of public progress, apply the doctrine to them."

It was because death by private hands begets death that it came to be limited by law. The French revolutionists of 1793 were insurgents created by oppression, who, having no experience of the limitations of freedom, contrived to make Liberty a greater terror than despotism. They killed on suspicion. Tyrannicide became a profession, and thousands followed the calling. Mrs. Francis Pulzsky once said to me at her own table, "Mr. Holyoake, when we had power we gave our influence to prevent any throat being cut. But no sooner were our enemies secure, whom we had saved, than they cut the throats of our party. When we get power again," said the brilliant little lady, "we will cut theirs without mercy." I said "I hoped not, for the forbearance she regretted was the noblest example democracy ever set." Leniency may fail for a time, but in politics it is a noble error. Acts of kindness will fail in private life, but kindness in the long run proves the first of virtues. She was speaking not of her own country, but of the policy of the Continental defenders of liberty, among whom were the Hungarian patriots, who suffered everywhere when the "Saviours of society" again got the upper hand.

In a free country "tyrannicide" is a worn-out theory. Under representative Government, the ballot-box, penny newspapers, and the right of public meeting, those who cannot extend the bounds of freedom do not understand their business. The printing press has made opinion a force in politics. If all those who depend upon the knife for improvement were to display half the amount of self-sacrifice which they have to make in their perilous method of extermination, they would see accomplished what they wish earlier and more surely.

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### *DEFENDING A POLE.*

(1858.)

WHEN a publisher in London, I had my business to consider, but so often as a public question arose I found myself under some unprofitable impulse to take part in it, when others with a more prudent sense of personal interest abstained. Louis Napoleon, in one of his disquieting and menacing New Year Day addresses, had announced that—"The Empire seeks a strong power capable of overcoming the obstacles which might stop its advance." "I do not," he said, "fear to declare to you to-day that the danger, no matter what is said to the contrary, does not exist in the excessive prerogatives of power, but in the *absence of repressive laws.*" This is exactly what has often been said of Ireland.

The President of the Senate, addressing the Emperor in reply, said—"Sire, your glorious House sits as firmly as the throne of England. The revolutionary spirit has been driven from France. [The Emperor having made the bloodiest revolution on record.] It is from foreign strongholds, situated in the centre of Europe [meaning England] that hired assassins are sent. Foreign Governments and people *do not take measures to give a legitimate support to the cause of order.*"

Mr. William Carpenter, the author of the best "Political Text Book" of the time, was chairman of the Discussion Forum, which the French Government described as "a coffee-house near Temple Bar," and he had to write to the Emperor informing him that "the members were for the most part substantial tradesmen and men of business, who discussed the question 'Is

Regicide Justifiable ?' without reference to existing governments or politics." The Emperor replied that he was satisfied with the explanation, which he well might be, as he knew all about it, and had hung about the Fleet Street Forum himself.

At this time (1858), Felix Pyat, M. Besson, and A. Talandier published a "Letter" in French, entitled "Parliament and the Press." Proceedings were taken against a Pole, Stanislaus Tchorzewski, for publishing the letter here. I thought that the ground of the prosecution, and the manner of it, were alike objectionable and unnecessary. The English could not read the letter in French, and the few Frenchmen likely to see it in this country were not likely to be influenced by it, as it told them nothing they did not already know. I asked Professor Newman for his opinion upon it, as one far more competent than myself to judge it. He answered (*Reasoner*, No. 615) that "the outline of thought in the pamphlet was judicial and its conclusion breathed no spirit of blood-thirsty revenge. It reminded us that Louis Napoleon was deposed and condemned for high treason by a lawful court, and that after this, being no longer a lawful officer, he had slaughtered citizens for doing that which the law commanded them to do—namely, to uphold the Constitution against him ; and that by such lawless violence he had seized and kept supreme power." There could be little danger from the Pyat Letter since it took Lord Derby, who was then in power, three weeks to make up his mind whether it ought to be prosecuted. The proceedings against the Polish publisher were believed to have been taken at foreign instigation, and amounted to denial of freedom of speech for the exiles among us—exiles who, being friendless, were entitled to our sympathy, and who, being residents in England, were entitled to equality ; who, being our guests, were entitled to our protection. I objected to the policy of prosecuting the publisher of Felix Pyat's "Letter," because it in no way endangered the life of Louis Napoleon. The conspirators who are to be feared are, as a rule, not those who are weak enough to proclaim their wishes, or suicidal enough to publish their intentions. By doing so they invite observation to themselves and fix suspicion upon their friends. Conspirators who publish their plans usually give hostages to the police that they shall never succeed.

The prosecution of Tchorzewski was a purely French prose-

cution, conducted with a political indecency alien to English sentiment. On the left hand of Mr. Jardine, at Bow Street, there sat, during the investigations, Sir Richard Mayne, the chief of the Metropolitan police, and on the right, agents of the French police; and we saw an English magistrate so unmindful of British dignity as to sit under their surveillance and act like a French official, and, forgetting his character as an English gentleman and his duty as an English magistrate, deliver himself of sentiments which we could only suppose were dictated to him. When Mr. Sleigh, speaking as a British barrister should, in the presence of the British people, uttered a few words which found their way to the heart of some poor exiles in court (who, glad to believe that a foreign servility was not tainting every English tongue, gave utterance to their feelings), Mr. Bodkin made offensive remarks upon Mr. Sleigh, who deemed it necessary to apologise for his own manliness. Mr. Bodkin (Sir Robert Peel's Bodkin), the prosecuting counsel, all the while spoke himself to that interfering Tuileries public whom, instead of his own countrymen, he represented. No demagogue in London, nor all the pamphlets published by exiles, had produced so much ill-blood between the two nations as the proceedings in Mr. Jardine's court. We cheer the demagogue and forget his speech. We invite the violent exile to dinner, and neglect his exhortation; but we remember as an abiding degradation when the English magistrate insults us in the eyes of the foreigner, and that too in London, where the countryman comes with wonder, the artizan with pride, and the provincial gentleman to watch our highest public manners. I was in Sheffield when I read the account of these proceedings against Tchorzewski. I consulted no one. My own sense of duty dictated the step I took, and I telegraphed to London to instruct my brother Austin to procure a translation and put it in the press.

The newspapers soon acquainted the Government that one result of their prosecuting an unknown Polish bookseller in Rupert Street, for having issued a French pamphlet, which few would ever see, was that a publisher in the city of London had issued an English edition which everybody could read. As I had no wish to be Bodkinized or Jardinized, I begged the Attorney-General to distinguish between this act of public

defence and one of defiance. In the preface I wrote to the English edition I issued at Fleet Street, I stated that it was not my interest to incur imprisonment, that I knew what it was and was not covetous to renew that experience, and that I neither wanted notoriety nor martyrdom. Therefore, I prayed the Government not to honour me with their perilous attentions. I sent the first copy of the Tchorzewski pamphlet in English to Lord Derby, who was then Premier, saying—

“ **MY LORD**,—Permit to me the liberty of enclosing to you a pamphlet which I deem a public duty to publish. I do not send it to each member of the Cabinet—that might appear a defiance. Not to send it to any one would be a courtesy ; I therefore send it to your lordship as one who, in the opinion of the people, views all political questions in an unprejudiced English spirit.”

In the silence of abject submission which reigned in France, we heard only the chains of the slave and the voice of the informer. That state of things concerned us. Despotism so near cast its shadow over England. To extend liberty here was a reproach to our ally ; every discussion upon it in London made Paris uneasy. Every plea for it here was an indirect reflection upon the ruler there. Still England did not desist. For myself I sought shelter under no technicality. I invited no consequences, nor did I evade them. I did but justify an English act by English reasons.

The pamphlet published by Stanislaus Tchorzewski was signed by the “ Committee of the Revolutionary Commune—Felix Pyat, Besson, A. Tallandier.” Tchorzewski I never saw ; Pyat I did not know, nor Besson. Tallandier was a friend of mine. He was the first who translated my “ History of the Rochdale Pioneers ” into the French language ; but no personal reason induced me to publish the manifesto of the Commune in English. My object was to vindicate the liberty of the English press. In my note to the English edition I said, “ I regretted the inopportune appearance of the Letter. Being issued while the fate of Orsini was undecided, it was calculated to ensure his execution. It was so illtimed that the Emperor might have been suspected of instigating its appearance.” But

at the request of Tallandier I omitted these words. Mazzini wrote me a letter approving of the Tchorzewski publication in English, as calculated to convince the Government of the futility of these prosecutions. Upon re-reading the prosecuted letter of Pyat, many years later, I thought its style neither so good, nor its sentiments so bad, as they were both believed to be then.

At the same time I commenced editing a series of "Tyranicide Literature," and began with a cheap edition of "Killing no Murder," by Colonel Titus, to show Englishmen what the Royalist doctrine of assassination was. I also published a remarkable poem entitled, "The Peace of Napoleon," by my friend, the late Mr. Percy Greg, and signed with the name under which he usually wrote for me—Lionel H. Holdreth. The poem was more indictable than anything which the Government honoured by prosecution. I quote a few prophetic verses:—

" Peace ! Hark, the voices of despairing men  
Pining in exile, squalor, solitude,  
Cry from the deadly swamps of far Cayenne—  
' God ! give us blood for blood ! '

Since that sad morning when December's sky  
Scowled on the brave who fruitlessly withheld  
The Perjurer's arms, the stones of Paris cry  
' God ! give us blood for blood ! '

And thou, fair partner of the Perjurer's throne,  
Recreant to virtue, truth, and womanhood !  
Think, if perchance he should not fall alone,  
' Twill but be blood for blood !

I pray thou may'st be scathless—spared in scorn—  
Husband, child, empire gone, till thou hast rued  
In bitter tears the hour that thou wert born  
When God sends blood for blood !

Blood shall have blood ere long, if One on high  
The prayer of earth hath heard and understood ;  
To whom the nations ceaselessly do cry—  
" God ! give us blood for blood ! " "

Notwithstanding, no proceedings were taken against me. By what reason the Government were actuated I know not—probably it was the City that saved me. I was a freeman of the city of London, which always sets itself against prosecutions of the press. My friend, Edward Truelove, at that time pub-

lished a pamphlet entitled "Tyrannicide," and his house being west of Temple Bar, he was arrested and taken to Bow Street. My house being in the City, I must have been taken to the Mansion House. It was impossible to prosecute the Pole for his French publication, and I be left unmolested. In the end the prosecution of Tchorzewski was dropped, and that against Mr. Truelove was compromised. Miss Harriet Martineau, Mr. William Coningham, M.P. for Brighton, Mr. John Stuart Mill, and Professor F. W. Newman publicly subscribed to a fund for Mr. Truelove's defence, names which may have induced the Government to desist from the prosecution they had commenced against him.

When the Government ceased to prosecute, the tyrannicide literature ceased also. The object was not persistence in it, but to vindicate the liberty of the press. Just resistance is of public advantage even when not successful in its aim, as in the case here related it appeared to be. Thiers said of Orsini's bombs—"They missed the Emperor, but they killed the Empire."

## CHAPTER LXIX.

### *A LOST WILL.*

(1858.)

MR. FLETCHER, a gentleman of Kennington, often came to the Fleet Street House. One day he proposed to make me a loan of £250 in the form of a bill for three years, which I was to get discounted. I offered it to W. Devonshire Saul, who dealt in bills and wine, and who knew Mr. Fletcher. Without giving reasons, he declined it. To put it in circulation I must sacrifice a large proportion of the amount. As I felt bound to repay Mr. Fletcher, a large discount would render me unable to do it. All the while he intended to give the sum to me, but did not say so. Eventually I returned the bill, lest I incurred an obligation beyond my power to meet. This act no doubt wounded his commercial pride, and also gave him a deplorable impression of my business ability. Had I been a "smart" man, I should have got what I could for the bill, and have left him to take it up. Had I had business wit, I should have kept the bill and had it presented by a confederate, when matured, and thus have profited. It was the feeling of being bound in honour to repay the money if I received it which prevented my retaining it. Herein scrupulousness was a disadvantage.

Mr. Fletcher showed no resentment, and made his will in my favour. At that time he estimated his fortune at £30,000. Having fair expectation of life, he invested a large portion in purchasing an annuity of £2,000 a year, expecting that in due course the proceeds of the annuity would make him still richer. The will he handed to me in a sealed parcel, which my brother Austin kept for me. At the end of two years he asked for the parcel again. One day he invited Robert Cooper and me to

tea, and afterwards in my presence handed him the will. Mr. Fletcher had acquired a prejudice against me, being told by the chief person in my employ that fair play had not been given at Fleet Street to Mr. Cooper's works — he being an author and lecturer like myself. This was entirely untrue. Had I been aware of what had been told to Mr. Fletcher, it would have been easy to disabuse his mind. If my conduct had been what he believed, he would have been justified in resenting it. Mr. Cooper was editing the *Investigator*. He considered himself a rival to me, and his paper frequently contained attacks upon me, not conceived with the intention of being pleasing. But I published his paper all the same, never caring what anybody said. Never did any one, save Lloyd Garrison, of America, publish more articles against himself than I did. In the *Reasoner* similar articles were constantly published, nothing being omitted save dishonouring imputations upon others. My chief clerk at Fleet Street was formerly a local preacher, who seemed trustworthy. Finding that he owed his last employer £20, I lent him the money to pay it, as I declined to take an indebted man into my service. This person ultimately appropriated to his own uses upwards of £100 of my money. For reasons of his own he told Mr. Fletcher that I kept back Mr. Cooper's books, although I had enjoined him that Mr. Cooper's publications should be kept prominently in sight—and they were so kept—that he might have no cause for jealousy.

No doubt in due time Mr. Fletcher would have found that he had been misinformed and would have restored his will to me, but in a few months he unexpectedly died. Being penurious, though rich, he was insufficiently clothed in inclement weather, and, being overtaken by a storm, the effects were fatal to him in a few days. Mr. Cooper received the remainder of his fortune, which, however, did not do him much good, as he went into a banking business and lost it. For three days only after Mr. Fletcher's death the sense of my loss was a sharp discomfort, but it passed away then. During the time the will was in my possession, I was constantly away debating with adversaries in distant parts of England and Scotland, and seldom had time to see Mr. Fletcher, or I should have found out what influence he was under. Thus absorption in public work was against me.

When the local preacher referred to ceased to be in my employ, he owed me £112. He then sought an engagement as minister among the Unitarians. The Rev. Samuel Martin, hearing of this, told Mr. Kendrick, in whose hands the appointment rested, that he "had better see Mr. Holyoake before he made it." How Mr. Martin came to know of the indebtedness to me I was never aware, though I was indebted to Mr. Martin's consideration. Mr. Kendrick came to me and asked my opinion of the candidate. My reply was that "he had zeal and doubtless good intention, but was wanting in self-control, but under clear and strong direction he might make a useful preacher." As I had once trusted him, I was unwilling by any word of mine to stand in the way of his future.

Mr. Kendrick then asked me for what sum, if any less than that owing, the candidate's indebtedness could be condoned, as they could not receive him into their communion unabsolved. My answer was that, as "I had once told him, if he repaid me the half of that which he owed me, I would acquit him, I would do so still." That sum was sent me, and I owed that sum to Mr. Kendrick's Unitarian sense of honour. I wrote a letter at Mr. Kendrick's request, which enabled the appointment to be made. No acknowledgment was ever sent me by the person concerned for the consideration shown him, nor any return made for the half amount in equity due to me, when it became possible to him to make it.

## CHAPTER LXX.

### *MR. SECRETARY WALPOLE AND THE JACOBIN'S FRIEND.*

(1858.)

A GOVERNMENT ought to be more scrupulously just and more considerately generous than private individuals, for they have unlimited powers of damage, annoyance, and penal revenge in their hands. They can strike at the innocent and guilty alike, and that passes for commendable vigilance in them which in individuals would be seen to be rank spite. The Dr. Bernard trouble did not end with his acquittal. One not a Frenchman, but because he was a friend of Dr. Bernard, became a person of so much interest or anxiety to the English Government that they offered £200 for his head. They did not put it in that plain way, but their object was to try him for his life. He was known as a man of noble friendships and generous courage, or he had not permitted himself to be regarded as Dr. Bernard's personal acquaintance.

His high spirit, his disinterestedness, his philosophic mind and personal intrepidity, were a constant cause of inspiration to all who knew him. He became, as I have said, the subject of solicitude on the part of the Government, who thought they had international reason for hanging him. They had no just cause for such belief, but made a show of assiduity in the matter, to gratify the susceptibility of the Emperor of the French, who was then considered our "good ally." The friend whose death was sought Dr. Bernard and I sometimes met at the White Swan Hotel, Covent Garden, and at Ginger's Hotel, which, as I have said, then stood near Palace Yard, Westminster Bridge Road.

After the Lepelletier affair, the Government were induced to offer a reward of £200 for the discovery of my friend, who, having means of knowing what was in their minds, was nowhere apparent in the British dominions. For two years he was an exile. The reward for his apprehension being still in force at the end of that period, I and Mr. Baxter Langley waited upon the Home Secretary, who in those days was Mr. Spencer Walpole. We presented ourselves to him as persons who had a friend to sell, provided we were sure of payment. We were not so lost to self-respect as not to put a price upon our virtue. We were prepared to be perfidious for £200. On our being guaranteed the reward, the gentleman the Government desired to see would appear. He had no objections to being hanged if that was thought right, but, being accustomed to outdoor life, he objected to be imprisoned, but would (he instructed us to say) present himself on the day appointed for trial. We stated that the reward offered for his appearance, which we applied for, was to defray the cost of his defence, as it was not reasonable that any one void of offence should be put to expense to prove it. Though aided by gratuitous services on many hands, Dr. Bernard's defence cost him £850. He, with no means but his earnings, had many lectures, lessons, and prescriptions to give before he paid that serious bill. All we asked further was that when our exiled friend appeared within British precincts, the police who might become aware of it should not have a right of reward as against us, who brought him within their range. The Government took time to consider the proposition. The sagacious Home Secretary surmised some plot, and Mr. H. Waddington, writing from "Whitehall, June 18, 1858," told us that "he was desired by Mr. Secretary Walpole to inform us that the reward of two hundred pounds offered by the Government in the case referred to by us had not been withdrawn." This was so far assuring—the money was to be had if we could induce Mr. Walpole to sign a cheque for it.

My friend the "Man in the Street" (the writing name in the *Morning Star* of Mr. Langley) took steps in his way, and I in mine, to cause Mr. Walpole to know that the object of the application made to him was simply the return home of the political wanderer in whom the Government had taken such complimentary but mistaken interest. Mr. Milner Gibson put one of his skilful

questions in the House of Commons. Mr. William Coningham, M.P. for Brighton, always for justice, spoke with Mr. Walpole. In twenty-four days Mr. Waddington wrote a much more intelligent and satisfactory letter, thus :—

"WHITEHALL, July 12, 1858.

"GENTLEMEN,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Walpole to inform you that, since the date of my answer to your application, the law officers of the Crown have been consulted and have expressed the opinion that it is not advisable to take any further steps in the prosecution in question. The Government have consequently determined to put an end to the proceedings against that gentleman and to withdraw the offer of a reward of £200 for his apprehension.—I remain, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

H. WADDINGTON.

"Mr. G. J. Holyoake—Mr. J. B. Langley."

This letter was a charter of freedom. Mr. Walpole, in his gentlemanly way, so intended it. It was explicit and complete. We have had Home Secretaries and Irish Secretaries who would have gone so far as to say that the reward was withdrawn, and have kept silence as to whether other "proceedings" might or might not take place at the discretion of the Government. The terms of our letter of inquiry as to the reward would have been answered and no more. All the requirements of cold, contemptuous, red-tape courtesy would have been fulfilled, and we could have made no complaint. Besides, Mr. Walpole was under no necessity of showing civility to one reputed to be a friend of Orsini and Dr. Bernard, however distinguished his social position might be. In the opinion of Mr. Walpole's class, insolence would not only have been condoned, it would have been applauded, as we have since seen with Irish gentlemen. Silence as to future proceedings would have been thought politic. The Emperor of the French had his views of the affair ; and silence as to whether "further steps were put an end to" would have amounted to an unexpressed ticket-of-leave, without incurring the odium of formally issuing it, although no trial had been held and no verdict of guilty given. Dr. Bernard's friend, as a gentleman of independent spirit, would have still remained under accusation and must have stayed abroad.

But this was not Mr. Walpole's way. He did not agree with us on any question of opinion or politics, but he was a man of honour—an adversary of generous instinct—and his letter was a charter of acquittal. Withdrawing the reward, he withdrew the charge. And the exile returned to England, and dwelt many years in the land with honour.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

### *LORD PALMERSTON AND FEARGUS O'CONNOR'S SISTER.*

(1858-64.)

LORD PALMERSTON was a Minister for whom I had respect without sympathy. He was without prejudice, and without enthusiasm. Mr. Cobden said of him he was absolutely impartial, having no bias, not even towards the truth. This was not a general estimate of him, but provoked by an incident as to what Mr. David Urquhart called the "falsification of the Burnes despatches." Personally Lord Palmerston was capable of generous things, but in politics he was a Minister of the stationaries, and for years was kept in office by Whig and Tory, because he could be trusted not to do anything. He never said he was the enemy of reform, but he never "felt like" promoting it.

The author of no great measure, the advocate of no great cause ; like the singer, the dancer, and the actor, Lord Palmerston's genius was personal, and died with him. His power of waiting was something like Talleyrand's. He became great simply by living long and keeping his eyes open. His length of days was an advantage to him in diplomacy, as he knew all the tricks of two generations of intriguers all over the world, and had Palmerston any passion for the service of the people he had opportunities to do them good. His face was wrinkled with treaties. If pricked, he would have bled despatches.

The best thing ever said of him was that foreign tyrants hated him. It was not clear in his day why they did. The reason being he was seldom ready to befriend them. He caused the recognition of Louis Napoleon's usurpation which disgraced England

and set France against us. Yet Palmerston had merits which those whose aspirations he opposed were unable to estimate, or Mr. Gladstone would not have esteemed him so highly as he did. It was brought against him by Liberal leaders abroad, that he held out to them hopes of assistance, but rendered none when the time for it came. Still it was to his credit that he had diplomatic sympathy with their aims. It was seldom they found that in an English Foreign Minister. Any foreign leaders whom I knew, who spoke to me on the subject, I warned against expecting anything more than sympathy (and they might be glad if they got that), as the Foreign Office was quite independent of the people, and very often a generous Minister could not, under dynastic restraints, do what he wished.

About 1838 I was asked to join a political society which met at Mr. Jenkinson's (No. 6, Church Street, Birmingham), a bookseller and politician. It proved to be a Foreign Affairs Committee, established by David Urquhart. The object of the society I found to be to cut off Lord Palmerston's head. Things were bad among workmen in those days, and I had no doubt somebody's head ought to be cut off, and I hoped they had hit upon the right one. The secretary was a Chartist leader named Warden, who ended by cutting his own head off instead, which showed confusion of ideas by which Lord Palmerston profited. Poor Warden cut his own throat. He was a man of ability, and had a studious mind. He gave me a volume of the speeches of Demosthenes, which he often read. It bore his name written in a neat hand. Lord Palmerston was not to be assassinated, but "impeached" in a constitutional way, and the block at the Tower was to be looked up, and the too long disused axe was to be furbished and sharpened for the occasion. This was my first introduction to practical politics.

Lord Palmerston always had an airy indifference of manner — *Punch* drew him with a straw in his mouth, as though he regarded politics from a sporting point of view. Buoyancy was his characteristic. Shortly before his death, when he was more than 80, I watched him crossing Palace Yard, one summer evening, when the House was up early. Cabs were running about wildly, but he dodged them with agility, and went on foot to Cambridge House, in Piccadilly, where he resided.

This notice of Lord Palmerston is, of course, confined to matters of personal knowledge, or of the influence he exercised on agitations in which I was concerned or interested. Cobden warned all reformers anxious for an extension of the franchise that nothing would be done while Lord Palmerston lived. There was no hope until heaven called him away. When at length he died, I wrote that "the political atmosphere was fresher, if not sweeter." The Reform Club draped itself in black as his remains passed by its doors. The Carlton Club might have done this consistently. The Princess of Wales sat at the window of St. James's Palace, next her own house, to see the Premier's funeral pass. How they bury public men in Denmark I know not. She could not be favourably impressed with the English way. A dreary, ugly hearse, with horses carrying on their ribs a tinfoil, gingerbread-painted plate of the Palmerston arms, was the tinsel centre of the pageant—not inappropriate considering the noble lord's career as far as the people were concerned.

He learnt from Lord Melbourne the art of doing nothing. Melbourne valued most those advisers who could show him how a public question could be let alone. Palmerston had the merit in his turn of impressing Disraeli with the advantage of gaiety in politics. The rich were glad to have reform put back with a jest, but working men had not the same reason for satisfaction.

Towards the end of his life, Lord Palmerston was invited to Bradford to lay the foundation-stone of the new Exchange. On that occasion, the working men were desirous of presenting an address to him, upon their wish for an extension of the franchise. Mr. Ripley, chairman of the Exchange Committee, utterly ignorant of Lord Palmerston's nature, refused to permit any approach to him. The worst enemy of Lord Palmerston could not have done him a worse service. Nothing would have pleased him better than to have met a working-class deputation. His personal heartiness, his invincible temper, his humour and ready wit would have captivated the working men, and sent them away enthusiastic, although without anything to be enthusiastic about.

At that time, 1864, I was editing the *English Leader*, read by many working-class leaders in Bradford. What I could do

by articles and lectures in the town to encourage them to maintain public silence on Lord Palmerston's visit I did. They put out an address in which they told the people that more was involved in the visit than the ceremony of laying a foundation stone.

"The principal actor," they said, "being no less a personage than the Prime Minister of England, the working classes will be expected, by the promoters of the visit, to assemble in thousands, and give his lordship welcome—receiving him with plaudits without a thought as to whether the object of their homage is a friend or foe to their just rights and privileges. But will it be wise on your part—who are as yet unenfranchised, and mainly so through the influence of this Minister's antagonistic policy—to greet him with demonstrations of gladness? What has he ever done to merit it? Nothing. Then reserve your enthusiastic cheers for such men as have with talent and influence—on the platform and by the pen—advocated your social and political advancement in society as a class. Working men, would it not be more manly and becoming to exhibit, in some measure, your disappointment at the manner in which your claims have been received—not by hisses and groans—but by a dignified and significant abstinence from all cheering, or other noisy demonstrations of joy?"

This was a remarkable address. I urged adherence to this policy, saying, "The middle-class cannot cheer like the people. Gentlemen never do it well; they don't think it respectable. It is contemptuously said that the working class will cheer anybody, and Lord Palmerston is just the man to make an argument against the people, if they run after him. He is sure to say that 'they receive him with acclamations as they do Mr. Gladstone; that their voices go for nothing, for they have not the self-respect to keep their mouths shut, or sense to tell a friend who would give them a right from one who will give them nothing.'"

Bradford men did act on the advice given them. There were said to be 30,000 in the streets. The Exchange Committee, and friends of their way of thinking, did set up a cheer for Lord Palmerston, but, not being taken up by the people, it had a faint-hearted effect, and soon ceased. Lord Palmerston,

as Mr. W. E. Forster afterwards told me, was "touched and pained" at standing as it were alone in that vast and voiceless crowd. No hissing or groans would have produced such an effect. Hooting would have called forth counter-cheers, which would have been magnified in the press into effective applause. Silence could not be misrepresented.

Lord Palmerston, apart from Liberalism, had popular qualities. He had boldness and common sense. No Minister save himself had ever told the Scotch elders that it was useless to proclaim a public fast to arrest the cholera until they had cleaned the city. He thought more of scavengers' shovels than bishops' prayers.

In anything I wrote of him it was always owned that he had generous personal qualities which adversaries might trust. On one occasion I wrote to him, informing him "there was a Miss O'Connor living, a sister of Feargus O'Connor, and the only survivor of the family. She had more eloquence than her brother, but the poor lady was in very straitened circumstances; and although Feargus O'Connor often denounced his lordship, I believed he would not remember that against his sister in her day of need. It would be regarded as a very generous thing by the Chartists if his lordship would advise her Majesty to accord some slender pension to Miss O'Connor."

She had written to me at times, by which means I became incidentally aware of her necessitous condition. My friend Mr. Thornton Hunt conveyed my letter to Lord Palmerston, who kindly sent me word that "though it was not in his power at that time (the appointments of the Civil List being made for the year) to propose a pension, yet if the gift of £100 would be acceptable to Miss O'Connor, that sum should be at her disposal."

I sent her the letters, which otherwise I should quote here. I never heard further from her. The poor lady often changed her address. Whether the letters ever reached her—whether she died in the meantime—whether she accepted the offer and informed Lord Palmerston privately of it as I advised her, I never heard. But Lord Palmerston's generosity is a matter I record in his honour.

It was on Thornton Hunt's representation that Lord Palmerston agreed to procure me a seat in Parliament. He

said "he knew Mr. Holyoake would often vote against him, but at the same time he should find in him a fair adversary." Lord Palmerston's object was to show that a working-class representative could be brought into Parliament, and therefore there was no necessity for a Reform Bill for that purpose. Lord Palmerston's death prevented him carrying his intention into execution. Therefore I had reasons personally to respect Lord Palmerston. But respect does not imply coincidence of opinion, and it was on public grounds of political policy alone that I ever wrote dissenting words concerning him. He had secular views which I could well agree with. When Sir James Graham spoke in the China debate of the approval of conscience and the ratification of a Higher Power, Lord Palmerston declared that for his own part he did not look so far, and was content with the support of that House. This was the real Palmerston. The approval of conscience was always to be regarded, but he took a just view when he suggested that peace or war was better determined in Parliament by human than by ecclesiastical considerations.

## CHAPTER LXXII.

*THOMAS SCOTT—THE FRIEND OF BISHOP COLENSO.*

(1858.)

ONE morning, at the Reception Room we kept at 147, Fleet Street, a gentleman was announced who wished to see me. He was a tall man, of military bearing, with a long grey beard, abundant hair, and a voice of explosive power. It was Mr. Thomas Scott, then of Ramsgate, well known among scholars for his attainments in Hebrew literature. After some conversation on means of circulating works of theological criticism he was issuing, he said, with a pleasant frankness which I afterwards knew to be characteristic, “I had a great repugnance to meeting you, but I have come at the suggestion of Bishop Colenso. I was making in his presence some remarks against you, when the bishop said, ‘You go and see Holyoake ; you will find the devil is not so black as he is painted.’” In those days I was commonly thought of under some Satanic similitude, and Bishop Colenso was the first ecclesiastic who suggested an abatement in the colour. I suppose I fulfilled the bishop’s forecast in point of hue, as Mr. Scott’s acquaintance passed into friendship which only ended with his death ; and many were the happy days I spent when his guest at his home in Ramsgate and Norwood, which Mrs. Scott made enchanting to all visitors.

Mr. Scott, I understood, had been employed in some military capacity among North American Indians. He told me he had camped out for two years at a time, without sleeping in a house. The son of a Scotch professor of great learning, he had Hebrew in his blood, and when he came home he was a Tory

in politics and a Liberal in religion. Dr. Colenso had so much confidence in his critical erudition that he submitted the proofs of his celebrated works to him. Mr. Scott presented to me a bound volume of proof sheets which he had corrected or revised for the bishop.

When Bishop Colenso went down to Claybrook, in Leicestershire, to preach, the then Bishop of Peterborough (the predecessor of Dr. Magee) sent an inhibition. Mr. Scott, who was skilled in things ecclesiastical, was waiting in the churchyard the arrival of the inhibition. The bishop's messenger did not appear until Sunday morning, shortly before the service would commence. Mr. Scott met him and demanded the inhibition from him. Whether, from Mr. Scott's magisterial manner or authoritative voice—for he had the appearance of one of the Sanhedrim—the messenger thought he was Bishop Colenso, or an official representative thereof, was never known, but he at once handed the inhibition to Mr. Scott, who dismissed him and put the document in his pocket. As Bishop Colenso found the inhibition never came, he preached in due course. The inhibition would have been respected had it been delivered; but as it was not, the Bishop of Peterborough could do nothing against Dr. Colenso. All the bishop could learn was that his messenger had delivered his inhibition to a gentleman whom he supposed to be authorised to receive it, and who neglected to deliver it to Dr. Colenso until after the sermon had been delivered. Dr. Colenso knew nothing of it until after, and was no party to its being intercepted.

Mrs. Scott, who was in earlier years a ward of Mr. Scott, was a lady of singularly bright ways—and the aptest, most indefatigable post parcel maker in the world. The innumerable pamphlets issued from their house were mostly made up by her. No committee could have conducted the remarkable propagandist bureau Mr. Scott administered. He being a gentleman, writers with a secret as to their authorship could trust him, when a committee, however honourable, could not command the confidence which was accorded unhesitatingly to one. He was an institute in himself. Ecclesiastics (Bishop Hinde was one) professors, and others to whom it was not convenient to give their names to the public, wrote for him. His house was a theological pamphlet manufactory. Ladies were among his

contributors. In some cases atheists wrote, whose names it would not have been prudent in Mr. Scott to print, as their arguments on independent subjects would have been misjudged. Mr. Scott himself was an ardent, unswerving Theist. His own works were as remarkable as any he published from the pens of others. He issued more than two hundred separate works to my knowledge—none of them mean or unimportant. The whole constituted a pamphlet library of controversy never equalled.

Mr. Scott died, and no successor has appeared. As the wise adviser and intrepid friend of Bishop Colenso, he will long live in the memory of all who knew how great his services were. To others, the old warrior devoting his years to scholastic research and criticism, with the enthusiasm of a young professor, will be a singular figure. He was the greatest propagandist by pamphlets of his own origination ever known to me, in reading or experience.

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

### *HOW BISHOP COLENSO BECAME CONVERTED.*

(1860.)

ON one or two occasions I met Bishop Colenso. His earnest, alert, inquiring demeanour, his frankness and tolerance would suggest to any one that he was for truth first and faith afterwards.

One Sunday night I was lecturing at the Hall of Science, City Road. At the conclusion notice was given out that it was expected Bishop Colenso would speak in that place next Sunday. He had been invited to lay his views before the audience assembling there. Simple as a child in matters of duty, he was ready to vindicate his views before any whom he supposed to be earnest inquirers. He never counted the risks; he never thought of them. Though he rejected the literary and arithmetical errors of the Scriptures, he was deeply Christian, while the audience he would have met were not so. I at once said it would be unfortunate for the bishop's cause if he came there, and I wrote and told him so. The Hall of Science had an atheistic reputation, and his enemies, who were then very fierce against him, would never dissociate his appearance at the Hall of Science from sympathy with the far-reaching heresy promulgated in it. It would have been a distinction to the side to which I belonged that the bishop should appear among us, but it would not have been generous in us to have permitted it at his peril. The audience, I was glad to see, thought so too.

The bishop sent me a brief note of thanks, and did not appear there. He may have had this incident in his mind when he

told Mr. Scott that I was a paler sort of Satan than I was usually represented to be.

Or Bishop Colenso may have had in memory an earlier incident. When he was appointed to the See of Natal, he selected (I forget how it came to pass) an intelligent Secular carpenter and frequent correspondent of the *Reasoner* — Robert Ryder — to go out and build his church and school-house. Mr. Ryder, when I first knew him, was employed at New Leeds, near Bradford. He afterwards came to London, and kept a small inn off Gray's Inn Road, which he gave up to go to Natal. As Ryder had never been abroad, he asked my advice as to going, and I encouraged him to accept the Natal engagement. He had become acquainted through the *Reasoner* with Herbert Spencer's writings, and was his earliest disciple whom I knew. His fascination was the first edition of "Social Statics." It was to him as a new Gospel. He had a copy with him wherever he went. Its contents had coloured his mind, and he took the book with him to Natal. He was in the bishop's employ several years, and sent me photographs which he had taken of the actual Zulus who were said to have converted the bishop, long before any such conversion was heard of in England. This English carpenter and builder was an agnostic, an enthusiast, and a ready disputant. Zulus were workers under him, and the bishop saw them daily and conversed with them as to their religious views, so far as they had any. They were very shrewd and good at argument, as the bishop admits in one of his works. My friend told me that the Zulus used to remark upon the fact that the bishop had a room built in the rear of the church, in which he stored an eighteen-pounder. They knew what that cannon was for, and they thought that the bishop, fair-spoken as he was, did not place his ultimate reliance on the "Good Father" in whom he told them to trust.

Afterwards the bishop's builder came to consider that his contract was not fairly fulfilled by the bishop, and sent me particulars for publication in the *Reasoner*. I endeavoured to dissuade him from an action at law which he contemplated. Being a mathematician, the bishop was more likely to be right in matters of charge than he. Besides, the bishop was a gentleman as well as a Christian, and therefore to be trusted. Further, it would be a scandal for a Secularist to go to law with a good

bishop, who had incurred the enmity of his order by his splendid tolerance. It came to pass that Mr. Ryder had to sue the bishop, when occurred the only instance in which the bishop displayed the prejudice and injustice too often the characteristics of his profession.

It was years before Bishop Colenso's criticisms of the Old Testament were "noised abroad," when my friend Robert Ryder became his mechanical manager of works in the diocese of Natal. Mr. Ryder, in a letter which I published in the *Reasoner* in June, 1858, said :—

"I am the same R. R. I was when you knew me in England. I have laboured for the last three years to prove that it is possible for an atheist (so-called), holding extreme speculative views, to work with a party, for a secular object, whose views are diametrically opposed to mine. I endeavour to prove in my own person that duty, faithfulness, and honesty are moral qualities independent of creed. I have risen to the highest honour and confidence my employer can bestow upon me—not for what I believe, but for what I have done, and the manner in which I have served the mission in general. The bishop is quite familiar with my views, but he is one of those noble men who adorn Christianity by his consideration, his kindness, his life, and his freedom from all intolerance. He often comes to get one of your works out of my library. I have my esteemed employer's certificate that I have served the cause well, and faithfully discharged my duties for three years, and am going on for two more years. I have been entrusted with thousands of pounds. I have built three churches, three schools, a corn-mill, a 20-feet water wheel fitted up with lathes and smithy, potter's wheel, and simple machines; also an industrial training school for the natives, one hundred of whom we have in training, chiefly young boys. We do not attend much to the old ones. I brought a brick and tile machine from England, with which we have made about a million bricks. The natives have made a great number by hand, a thing they never did before. I am now building the Bishop's Palace, 120 feet frontage, with two wings of 80 feet each, in the Elizabethan style of architecture."

This passage is interesting as showing how early and to how great an extent the bishop provided, not only for the spiritual.

but for the material comfort and education of the Zulus. In publishing Mr. Ryder's letter, I divested it of all names and allusions by which any readers in England could connect it with the Natal Mission. A letter from Brazil and one from Mexico, equally divested of personal references, had brought my correspondents trouble. Therefore no mention was made of any place in Africa, and, as there was no reason to suppose that the *Reasoner* circulated there, it was concluded that any person referred to was sufficiently protected. However, the Rev. Calvert Spensley, being in England, called at the *Reasoner* office and purchased some numbers, one of them containing the letter in question. He recognized that the scene of Mr. Ryder's work was at Ekukanyeni, and sent the letter in the *Reasoner* to the editor of the *Natal Mercury*, who reprinted it under the imaginative title of "Atheistic Socialism in Natal." Mr. Ryder had been before described by the editor of the *Mercury* as "the bishop's very liberal-minded, shrewd, and independent agent." All that could be brought against Mr. Ryder was that in 1848 he had been on a deputation to Paris to congratulate the Government on the establishment of the "Republic Democratic and Social." The bishop was now assailed for employing such an agent, and charged with disseminating "Atheistic Socialism." Not a thought was given nor a word of consideration said that Mr. Ryder had, in spite of his convictions, generously devoted himself to aiding the mission work and in increasing its reputation and influence by building the churches and schools, all the while keeping silence on his own opinions that the bishop and his work might not be compromised.

The Rev. C. Spensley was engaged upon a rival Dissenting Mission, and his party naturally took pleasure in disparaging the Church Mission ; but it was not justifiable to do it by untrue and venomous accusation.

Mr. Ryder defended himself in a clear, manly letter in the *Natal Star*. He said : "I have never made a profession of atheism. I engaged to the Bishop of Natal as mechanical manager to the Mission. My labours have been perfectly secular, having nothing whatever to do with either Theism or Atheism. Neither have I taken any part in matters political or religious, private or public, or sought to obtrude any views of mine on those subjects since I came to this colony."

He accounted for the hostility of the *Natal Mercury*, the organ of the Dissenting Mission, by stating that the editor had made overtures to join the Church, and "offered himself to the bishop body, soul, and paper," which being refused, the editor was resentful.

The rival mission succeeded in doing the Church Mission some harm. As soon as Mr. Ryder's letter to the *Reasoner* appeared in the colony—in which letter Mr. Ryder had said "the Zulus had intelligence, truth, probity, and chastity, all the virtues of the Christian nations without their vices, and he did not see what Christianity could do for them"—the bishop discharged him, lest the Church Mission should suffer; and Mr. Ryder was obliged to appeal to the law to recover the claim he had against the bishop. The decision was given in Mr. Ryder's favour. The bishop then appealed against it and lost. The judges confirmed the decision in favour of his late agent. An attempt was made to disqualify Mr. Ryder's evidence by reason of his opinions, but his word was believed against the bishop. The judge who gave the judgment of the court said: "If I followed feeling and class prejudice, I should decide in favour of the educated man of my own class, rather than for the uneducated man Ryder. But justice stands in the way." Ryder had no written engagement, but his character went with his word.

It is singular that the bishop, whose characteristic was just-mindedness, should have been unfair to one who was not a Theist. He was prejudiced against heresy when he was ignorantly described as having sympathy with it. He afterwards saw, when Christian persecution befel him, that truth and fairness often co-existed in persons who did not hold his theistical belief—from which belief he never departed himself.

Mr. Ryder had seen frequent accounts and quotations in the *Reasoner* of Lieut. Lecount's "Hunt after the Devil," and probably had the book in his library. There was nothing about the "Devil" in Lecount's three volumes, which were filled with calculations of the dimensions of the ark, with reference to its required capacity. The chief statements of the Old Testament which could be tested by figures, Lecount, being a great mathematician, had presented with an originality and vividness not before shown. If the bishop had not seen

the book, it was a remarkable coincidence that he should go over the same ground in the same way, applying the same methods, and arriving at similar results.

Any reader of this chapter will see the bishop had ample means of becoming acquainted with the intellectual difficulties of heretics. Being himself an accomplished arithmetician, the investigation by which he became distinguished was natural to him, and it was quite out of the line of any Zulu to suggest it. The Zulus were strongest concerning the difficulties of Theism ; but the bishop was never in any degree moved by their arguments, except so far as their intelligence and earnestness may have inspired him with tolerance and respect for extreme difference of belief. The Zulus had a quick sense of moral preception, of the discrepancies between profession and practice, but these were points upon which the bishop did not deal in his Pentateuchal criticisms. He dwelt mainly with intellectual and scientific objections.

When his first volume on the Pentateuch came out it was said of him—

“ To Natal, where savage men so  
Err in faith and badly live,  
Forth from England went Colenso,  
To the heathen light to give.

But, behold the issue awful !  
Christian, vanquished by Zulu,  
Says polygamy is lawful,  
And the Bible isn't true ! ”

The bishop had not said this, but it was quite as near to the truth as clerical criticism usually gets on its first effort. Dr. Cumming was one of his adversaries. He was an ingenious prophet who predicted the end of the world in a certain year, and at the same time negotiated a lease of his house for a much longer period, whereby he obtained a reduction of rent to which he was not morally entitled. He issued some frenzied pamphlets entitled “ Moses right, Colenso wrong,” which I answered by another series entitled “ Cumming wrong, Colenso Right ; by a London Zulu.” Bishop Colenso certainly showed that an educated Christian gentleman, who had sympathy for the people and a genial toleration of the pagan conscience, could do much for their elevation in the arts of life.

The bishop took his beautiful electrical apparatus and delivered lectures with experiments in Natal to the great delight of the Zulus, who in their grateful and appreciative way called him Sokululeka, Sobantu, "Father of raising up"—"Father of the People." No Zulu heart would apply such honouring words towards Dr. Cumming, whose divinity was a snarl and his orthodoxy a sneer. One day I sent the bishop a set of the pamphlets I had written in reply to his adversary. Here in his answer dated from Pendyffryn, Conway, July 25, 1863:—

"DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged by your note. I enclose a letter from Professor Kuenen, of Leyden, which you may like to see. He ranks not merely *among* the first—but, I believe, as *the* first—of living Biblical critics, and treats my book rather differently from Dr. Cumming and Co.—Faithfully yours,

J. W. NATAL."

The bishop also sent me the third part of his "Examination of the Pentateuch" on its publication.

Next to Huc and Gabet's Travels in Tartary, Bishop Colenso's "Ten Weeks in Natal" is the most alluring missionary book I ever read. Had ecclesiastical appointments gone by merit in Colenso's time, he would have been made Archbishop of Canterbury, as he had more learning and more Christianity, in the best sense of the term, than any contemporary prelate. With noble self-sacrifice he ended his days among the Zulu people. He was the friend of their kings—he was ceaseless in pleading for justice to Cetewayo. He was the only bishop for centuries who won the love of a barbarian nation.

Mr. Ruskin, whose regard is praise, presented his large diamond to the Natural History Museum on the condition that the following words should always appear on the label descriptive of the specimen:—"The Colenso diamond, presented in 1887 by John Ruskin in honour of his friend, the loyal and patiently adamantine first Bishop of Natal."

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

*LORD COLERIDGE AND THOMAS HENRY BUCKLE.*

(1859.)

MR. JUSTICE ERSKINE, in his address to me, said in 1841, that "the arm of the law was not stretched out to protect the character of the Almighty. The law did not assume to be a protector of God." But he used it so all the same. His words, however, admitted that blasphemy, as respects Deity, is not a crime which the law takes cognizance of. Blasphemy is only a secular concern, a crime that affects the peace and taste of society.

Blasphemy is an erminic creation. In the eyes of a Theistical moralist, orthodox Christianity is blasphemy of a bad kind. Yet a judge seldom considers that the conscience of an atheist is outraged by ordinary Christian language. Usually the judge protects Christians alone, and, according as he is bigoted or tolerant himself, his definition of blasphemy is malignant or generous. In cases of opinion judges make the law, and when a Lord Chief Justice is tolerant it is fortunate, since his judgment becomes a precedent which minor judges respect. Lord Coleridge, in giving judgment on certain publications two or more years ago alleged to be blasphemous, said to the jury :—

"If the law as I laid it down to you is correct—and I believe it has always been so ;<sup>1</sup> if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the *fundamentals of religion may be attacked*, without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel. There are many great and grave writers who have attacked the

<sup>1</sup> If so, it has been disregarded by most judges.

foundations of Christianity. Mr. Mill undoubtedly did so ; some great writers now alive have done so too ; but no one can read their writings without seeing a difference between them and the incriminated publications, which I am obliged to say is a difference *not of degree, but of kind*. There is a grave, an earnest, a reverent, I am almost tempted to say a religious tone in the very attacks on Christianity itself, which shows that what is aimed at is not insult to the opinions of the majority of Christians, but a real, quiet, honest pursuit of truth. If the truth at which these writers have arrived is not the truth we have been taught, and which, if we had not been taught it, we might have discovered, yet, because these conclusions differ from ours, they are not to be exposed to a criminal indictment. With regard to these persons, therefore, I should say, *they are within the protection of the law as I understand it.*"

This judgment gives protection against Christian penalties to such writers as Buckle, Carlyle, Harriet Martineau, Huxley, Tyndall, Morley, and Spencer. It is the amplest Charter of Free Discussion yet promulgated on high authority in any nation or in any country.

One day Mr. William Coningham, then M.P. for Brighton, took me to call on Thomas Henry Buckle, who was residing with his mother in Sussex Square in that town. Mr. Coningham had often spoken to me of Mr. Buckle as one who had long been engaged on a great work which would make an impression upon the age. It proved to be the "History of Civilization," which was afterwards published. It was Sunday morning when our visit was made. Mr. Buckle wore a light dress ; he had a fresh complexion, a welcoming manner, and appeared to me as a country squire with unusual ease and readiness in conversation. He did not give me the impression that he was a philosopher, a man of ideas, of studious and immense research ; but I knew all this when I subsequently read his review in *Fraser's Magazine* for May, 1859, of John Stuart Mill's famous treatise on "Liberty." After thirty years I have read the review again with equal wonder and admiration. We have no such reviews in these days. We have writers whose sentences of light and music linger in the ear of the mind, but we have none who have Buckle's passionate

eloquence and generous eagerness in defence of unfriended heretics.

It was in that review that he animadverted on the trial of Thomas Pooley before Mr. Justice Coleridge, at Bodmin, in 1857, and on the part taken by Mr. John Duke Coleridge (now Lord Chief Justice Coleridge), who was the prosecuting counsel pleading before his father. I had written a narrative of the career and trial of Pooley, having been down to Cornwall, at the instance of the Secularists of that day, to report upon Pooley's case. Mr. J. D. Coleridge replied to Mr. Buckle in defence of his father, Sir John Coleridge, and himself, and stated, in his remarks in *Fraser's Magazine*, for June, 1859, "that every fact mentioned by Mr. Buckle is to be found in the aforesaid report, and often nearly in the language of Mr. Holyoake." It was so. Mr. Mill had mentioned my name in "Liberty," and that of Pooley, which led Mr. Buckle to inquire of me what the facts of the case were. I sent him my published narrative. Though I had been long before, and was at the time, exposed to a storm of clerical persecution, no resentment colours that story. There is no publication of mine which I would more willingly see reprinted, and by which I would consent to be judged as a controversialist narrator, than by that. But in any such reprint I should withdraw the phrases in which I represent that Mr. J. D. Coleridge "concealed facts from the jury," or was otherwise consciously unfair ; nor should I use the same accusatory words I did in speaking of Sir John Coleridge, the judge. Afterwards, when the remission of Pooley's sentence was sought, and the Judge consulted upon it, he wrote to say that "he saw no reason why Pooley should not receive a free pardon under the circumstances stated." At the same time he remarked that he did not suspect Pooley's insanity, that "there was not the slightest suggestion made to him" thereunto, nor had he been led to inquire into it, and "he should have been very glad" to arrive at the conclusion he was insane and have "directed his acquittal on that ground." Mr. J. D. Coleridge on his own part said in his reply to Mr. Buckle :—"I took pains to open the case in a tone of studied moderation. I carefully explained to the jury that the prosecution was not a prosecution of opinion in any sense. I mentioned, and I beg their pardon for here repeating, the names of Mr. Newman, Mr. Carlyle,

and Miss Martineau, as persons who maintained what I and others might think erroneous opinions, but who maintained them gravely, with serious argument and with a sense of responsibility, and whom no one would dream of interfering with. I said that the time was long gone by for persecution, which I thought as foolish as it was wicked ; but that as liberty of opinion was to be protected, so was society to be protected from outrage and indecency." This is not only entirely fair ; it is a generous interpretation of freedom of speech, and is consistent with what Mr. Coleridge, as Lord Chief Justice, avowed in yet more remarkable language twenty-six years later. There was no report of the trial. No one whom I could meet in Cornwall was aware of what had been said to the jury, and the strange severity of the sentence hid from my mind the probability of its being said. The letter of the judge and the speech of the counsel I have quoted show that I was wrong in saying that there was a "concealment" of facts, or "shameful reticence" on his part, or in suggesting conscious unfairness on his father's part. As I am the only person remaining on Pooley's side, conversant with the facts of the trial as they subsequently transpired, it is a duty in me to make the correction.

Pooley had no counsel, no friend, and his side was not put before the court. The *Spectator*, which in those days was always well informed on these cases, had the only report which appeared in the London press ; the writer, probably a barrister present, was struck with the signs of insanity in Pooley. He remarks, however, that "Mr. Coleridge was quite correct in his statement of the law as it stood."

My own opinion of the clergy of Liskeard, of public opinion there and in Bodmin, of the extraordinary indictment, of the lack of discernment in the jury, and of the strange extent of the sentence pronounced, remain the same. At the same time, it must be owned that Pooley's manner of acting, with which, as my narrative shows, I did not sympathize and did not conceal, must have set all uninquiring, unsuspecting persons against him.

Had what I learned of Pooley's life been known to the counsel and judge, their trial of Pooley would have ended differently. Had I known what limited knowledge of facts the court had of Pooley's history, I should have written differently

of those who conducted the trial and decided his fate. It did not seem to me to be possible that the pathetic facts of Pooley's life, for fifteen years known to his family, neighbours, and employers, could be unknown to gentlemen in the same town. It was not then known to me that Truth is more lame-stepping than Justice, and is very dilatory in making known what she knows. It was not then known to me that the rich know no more of the lives of the poor than persons on land know or care to know of the ways of fish in the sea. It was not known to me that theological prejudice may so close the eyes and ears of the mind that it neither sees nor hears outside itself. It was not known to me then, as it has been since, that in political warfare educated gentlemen on one side do not believe in the integrity of equally educated gentlemen on the other side, and not only put on their acts a construction never thought of by the actors, but will report as true the falsest charges after they have been publicly and often confuted. So I did think, without misgiving, that the pagan insensibility of Pooley had excited the indignation of counsel and judge, and led them to ignore the facts which I supposed them to know. Mr. Buckle, I doubt not, were he living to revise the statement he made, would cancel all imputations upon the personal honour or conscious unfairness of judge or counsel in this case, for Mr. Buckle himself invited all readers of his to peruse the defence of Mr. J. D. Coleridge, and he reprinted and circulated the most vehement passages against himself, and they were hardly less fierce than his own. Mr. Buckle always had fairness in his mind, and his publishing and circulating the strongest passages in reply to himself which his adversary had penned, is a proof of it. Only a candid man who cared more for the truth than for himself would do it.

That such a prosecution could take place and such a sentence as that upon Pooley could be pronounced excited Buckle's generous indignation. His brilliant defence of the poor, crazed, but intrepid well-sinker of Cornwall, is the only example in this generation or this century of a gentleman coming forward in that personal way, to vindicate the right of Free Thought in the friendless and obscure. Mr. Mill would give money, which was a great thing, or use his influence, which was more, to protect them, but Mr. Buckle descended personally into the arena to defend and deliver them.

## CHAPTER LXXV.

### *BEQUEST OF A SUICIDE.*

(1860.)

It is the common experience of those who advocate liberty in some new direction to receive an unforeseen and undesirable adhesion of all the "cranks," religious, social, and political, extant in the innovator's day. I mean by a "crank" one who mistakes his impressions for ideas, or, having ideas resting on proof only perceived by himself, insists, in season and out of season, on attention being given to them. He is a crank, whatever his "views" may be, who persistently claims notice for them before he has thought them out to their consequences and described the grounds on which they rest, so that others can discern and test them. The number of "cranks" are much larger in most parties than are supposed.

An innovator who knows his business presents his case as that of reasoned truth. The "crank," not knowing the justification and conditions of innovation, rushes at you from all directions to carry his fad forward. But discrimination is necessary, lest you repel a thinker who seeks direction or confirmation, which your experience may afford him. Sometimes a well-convinced but too ardent pioneer has fallen into evil environments from which he cannot see his way out. Among these was Bombardier Thomas B. Scott, 7th Battery, 8th Brigade, Royal Artillery, Cove Common, Aldershot. Having the making of a good soldier in him, he enlisted in the Royal Artillery, on being assured by the recruiting officer that he should have the rank and pay of a bombardier from the date of his entering the service. On this condition he entered, but

he soon found, as Mr. Bradlaugh found, that faith is not kept with recruits in the army. Scott found the condition was ignored, and when he complained, he was told it was unauthorised and used merely as an inducement for him to enlist. He concluded, therefore, that as his enlistment was false and a fraud, it was illegal, and he wrote to Mr. Sydney Herbert, who did not deny the fraud, but did not redress it. The reply of the Secretary of War was sent to me, which I returned or I would quote it. It seems strange that a man of Sydney Herbert's high character for honour neither accorded censure nor redress for admitted deceit. Scott's personal character was good, but the position assigned him was that of a gunner merely. He was employed as schoolmaster, and received certificates of competency from the General Inspector of Army Schools, from two head normal schoolmasters, and from his colonel, captain, and officers. He was requested to stand examination as a candidate for a studentcy in the Military Asylum at Chelsea. He did so, and passed. He might have risen from the ranks, as was his ambition, had it not been for his speculative opinions and his untimely zeal. He had in camp some works I had written, and others, "Volney's Ruins of Empires" among them. This becoming known, he was arraigned before his colonel and officers on the charge of being an "atheist," though Volney was a Theist. A soldier enlists for the purpose of being killed, as the exigence or convenience of war may warrant. Scott did not object to this, and it does not appear what these officers had to do with a gunner's opinions on outside questions, entirely apart from his duty; and his trial for the purely ecclesiastical offence was irrelevant.

Scott made the mistake of considering it his duty to do as the apostles did (which is only counted meritorious in them) of standing by his opinions. For doing this he was sent back to do his duty as a gunner, was denied the privilege of entering the Normal School, and his prospects of military advancement were cut off. This made him despondent.

In December the same year (1860) Scott had written to me to advise him as to some mode of obtaining his discharge; but as I had no means of procuring funds for that purpose then, I counselled him to observe circumspection as to his opinions until he could be bought off. He then, through his captain,

sought to speak to his colonel on the subject of Mr. Sydney Herbert's letter. He was received in a very forbidding way. The colonel denounced him for his opinions, and told him that if he would abandon them, he would do something for him, and further told him that, until he did, he should not allow him to hold any rank or appointment in the Royal Artillery. Scott replied that his convictions were involuntary, which he could not change until stronger evidence appeared before him ; that, if the colonel believed him to be in error, it was his duty, as a Christian, to convince him rather than coerce him. Whereupon the colonel sent for the sergeant-major and ordered him to confine Scott in the guardroom, and the charge of insubordination to be entered against him. After two days' imprisonment, Sunday occurred, and he was marched under guard to church. Scott, therefore, desired a communication to be made to the officer in charge to the effect that he did not wish to enter the church, as his habit was to attend the Wesleyan Chapel, which he frequented, as all soldiers are obliged to attend some place of worship. Scott did not refuse to go, but expressed his wish not to go to church, and claimed liberty of conscience, as he did not agree with what he should hear in church. Being offensively addressed by the officer, he refused to go. He was then sent back into confinement, and an additional charge of "insubordination" was entered against him. Eventually he was taken before a court martial. Twelve hours prior to his trial, a copy of the charges against him was given to him, and he was told to frame his defence, but was denied writing material. He sent me a very dramatic account, on eight foolscap pages, of the whole affair. Around a large table in the mess-room sat three lieutenants, two captains, one major, and one colonel. On the table lay the Articles of War, a large Bible, and Jamison's Code. The officers seized the Bible, and, placing finger and thumb upon it, each kissed it, like cabmen, and swore to give justice on all sides, which they could not intend to do, being a military court without ecclesiastical functions or competence.

Scott found the court martial a mere department of the Church. Every scrap of evidence was made the most of against him ; but when he attempted to correct the misstatements of his judges, he was put down. He stood up manfully for his

principles, which was considered a new offence. He said he was ready to render the best service in his power to her Majesty, and give his life in discharge of his duty, but his conscience was his honour, and he could not change. They might drive him to suicide, but he would not deny his conviction. They did drive him to suicide, which was discreditable in gentlemen. Scott, on his own showing, spoke very plainly, and the court resented his contumaciousness ; but they should have remembered that they had got him into their power by fraud, and after knowing it, they kept him there. Being an intelligent, logical-minded man, this injustice preyed upon him. How long he was imprisoned I never heard. His health was broken, and he became an inmate of the hospital. There he had been two months when I next heard of him. He was daily harassed about his opinions. The doctor, the chaplain, the lieutenant, a captain's wife, and others assailed him from time to time. He stated to a Roman Catholic comrade, who had great regard for him, that he would give four years' service to any one who would get him bought out, as I learned afterwards. His own family were unable to do it. He had religious connections better able ; but his opinions prevented his being aided in that quarter. Solicitous always and to the end that no discredit should come through him to the cause he espoused, he provided that all his few debts should be paid. His prospects in the army ended, friendless and assailed, he died by his own hand. A faithful comrade of his, having occasion to write to me in 1862, informed me, in answer to my inquiry after Scott, that he had long been dead, of which no notice was sent me, although he had bequeathed what little property he had to me. I wrote to the colonel of his troop, and otherwise obtained information of his bequest. On learning that his family had need of anything he had, I transferred all his possessions to them, valuing all the same this proof of the dying regard of which he intended to assure me. Thus closed the career of the brave suicide, who will have no record save this.

In the Indian mutiny of 1857 the Mahometans would save any one who would consent to profess himself a Moslem. Those who would not were knocked on the head. Only one half-caste saved his life by denying his faith. Mr. A. C. Lyall, an

eminent Indian official, wrote lines of noble praise of their heroic honesty. One of those who thus died held the same opinions as poor Scott. In Mr. Lyall's poem he tells of the honest soldier's convictions and fate :—

“ A bullock's death, and at thirty years !  
    Just one phrase, and a man gets off it.  
Look at that mongrel clerk in his tears,  
    Whining aloud the name of the prophet !  
Only a formula easy to patter,  
    And, God Almighty, what *can* it matter ?

I must be gone to the crowd untold  
    Of men by the cause which they served unknown,  
Who moulder in myriad graves of old,  
    Never a story and never a stone  
Tell of the martyrs who die like me,  
    Just for the pride of the old countree.

Aye, but the word, if I could have said it,  
    I by no terrors of hell perplext—  
Hard to be silent and get no credit  
    From man in this world, or reward in the next.  
None to bear witness and reckon the cost,  
    Of the name that is saved by the life that is lost.”

These lines may fitly serve as Scott's epitaph. The conscientious heroism of the heretic is as noble as that of the Christian.

Other soldiers have written to me at times, who had found that volunteering to fight for the liberty of others did not include freedom for themselves—not even of their own minds.

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

### *VISIT TO A STRANGE TREASURER OF GARIBALDI.*

(1861.)

IN the year 1860 I was acting secretary to the London "Garibaldi Fund Committee." In many towns money was generously given for "the General," as Garibaldi was popularly and affectionately called. In some cases money so subscribed was sent to Garibaldi ; in others taken to him, to prevent misadventure. Some local treasurers neither sent it nor took it. Thus some sums were lost, and others held back by persons who did not know where to send them to ; and in some cases a treasurer would refuse to part with the funds in his hands until he was personally and specially certain of its reaching the General. For the convenience and satisfaction of all who held funds given for him, Garibaldi appointed Mr. W. H. Ashurst, his personal friend, as his treasurer. Mr. Ashurst was known in America as well as England for patriotic services and high character.

In an important town—not Newcastle-on-Tyne and not Birmingham—it was known that a banker held upwards of £400, which the General needed, but which never came to hand. I do not mention the name of the banker, because he was much and justly esteemed for his personal honour and interest in public affairs. In this narrative I therefore speak of him as Mr. Marvell, itself an honourable name in history. Mr. Ashurst wrote to him from 6, Old Jewry, London, E.C. (April 15, 1861), saying :—

"DEAR SIR,—I received on Saturday a despatch from General

Garibaldi, from which I beg to forward you the following extract :—

“ I have already by my last letter requested you to act as treasurer, or collector-general, in your country, of all monies raised in aid of the cause of Italy, and subject to my order, and this position I request you still to hold—advising me as before of the amount in hand, as to the disposal of which you shall from time to time receive instructions from me.

“ I now urgently call upon you to let it be known to the various committees and friends of Italy throughout Great Britain, that funds are greatly needed to complete the good work of aiding in the emancipation of those parts of our country which are still subject to priestly misrule and foreign oppression, and the liberation of which will require all the efforts of the patriots of Italy.”

“ I have the pleasure of bringing this instruction under your notice, and request that you will forward to me the balance remaining in your hands on the General Garibaldi account.—I am, dear sir, yours respectfully.

“ To D. M., Esq.

W. H. ASHURST.”

To this friendly letter the following singular reply was sent, April 17, 1861 :—

“ DEAR SIR,—We have peculiar notions on some subjects, and do not sympathise in all the views set forth in your favour of the 13th inst.

“ We decline to send any contributions to London, as we prefer to act independently, and shall take our own course when the proper time arrives,—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

“ D. M.”

It had been known for some time that this gentleman was unwilling to pay over the money in his hands to the General's treasurer. At length the London Committee of the “Garibaldi Fund” instructed Captain de Rohan, the General's aide-de-camp, to ask him for a special authorisation to be shown for the fuller satisfaction of hesitating and “independent” persons. Mr. Ashurst, on April 25, 1861, wrote again to the banker in question :—

"DEAR SIR,—I received your letter of the 17th inst., and communicated its contents to the committee. I found that they had already communicated with General Garibaldi in order to obtain from him some authority which should satisfy you as to the mode in which you should apply the money in your hands collected for him ; and it is now my duty to enclose to you the original authority from General Garibaldi, received by me this day, to send to me, as his treasurer, the money you have in hand. I have kept a copy of the authority and of the translation.

"In yours of the 17th, acknowledging mine of the 15th, you say that you 'do not sympathise in all the views set forth' in mine of that date. On reference to my letter you will find I set forth no views, but simply enclosed you the translation of a letter from General Garibaldi, and requested you to act upon it.

"To me personally it is of course indifferent what you do with the money the various contributors have confided to you for the Garibaldi Fund ; my duty is simply to follow out the instructions of General Garibaldi.

"I request the favour of your prompt acknowledgment of this letter, stating the course you intend to pursue, and remain,  
dear sir, yours faithfully,

W. H. ASHURST."

To this Mr. Ashurst received no reply.

Time went on and needs increased, for Garibaldi was still in the field—but the money came not. Mr. E. H. J. Craufurd, M.P. for the Ayr Burgh, being the Chairman of the Garibaldi Fund Committee, then wrote to the banker resenting the distrust and non-compliance of the request the general treasurer made in the name of the committee. No notice was taken of this communication, and there was no prospect, therefore, of obtaining the money. There was no legal remedy, and, had there been, the committee would not have felt justified in expending any funds to obtain it. I therefore proposed to the committee that they should give me 30s., which would be the third-class fare to and fro, to go to the town where the money lay (I paying my personal expenses myself), and I would collect the money for them. No one thought I should succeed, but, as they were unable to obtain the money themselves, leave was given me to try.

On arriving in the town I went to a society of working men, some of whom had been subscribers to the local fund, and informed them that the money intrusted to their treasurer had never been paid over, although a request to do so had reached him from Garibaldi. Then I asked them to make that fact known to other subscribers. Knowing members of the congregation where Mr. Marvell worshipped, I asked them whether it was possible that he could not be a man of good faith, or that he could have any object in withholding the Italian fund which had been intrusted to him from the uses for which it had been subscribed. We could not understand in London why he should disregard the written request of the General which had been sent him to forward the money to his treasurer. My calculation was that Mr. Marvell would very shortly have inquiries addressed to him by persons whose opinions he would not be likely to disregard. He being mayor of the town, I next communicated the information to such members of the Town Council as were known to me, who were promoters of the subscription. They were astonished to learn that the money was still in Mr. Marvell's hands. I remarked that we understood him to be a man of unquestionable honour, which they said was the case. I asked whether it was common in that town for a banker to withhold money contrary to the wishes of the subscribers ; besides, it was not respectful to Garibaldi (to whom it was due), whose friend he professed to be.

When I thought that news of these remarks made in the town by me, as acting secretary of the Garibaldi Committee, who must know what he was speaking of, had had time to reach the bank, I called there myself, and asked for an interview with Mr. Marvell, on business of personal importance. I was told that he was absent at his home, through indisposition, and I was asked whether it was business the manager could transact for him. I said I would explain my business to him, and he might himself judge. I said we understood in London that Mr. Marvell was a man of honour—that he not only kept public faith, but as a magistrate was bound to vindicate it. The manager said that was so, and wished to know on what ground any question to the contrary could be raised. I answered that he was aware that his principal was treasurer to the Garibaldi Fund, and that subscribers in that town entrusted their

money to him in the implicit belief that it would, in reasonable time, be paid over for the use of the General. But that was not the case, as several hundred pounds were still detained at that bank.

He admitted that the money was detained there, but said there were reasons why it had not been paid over. I answered that I knew that, but I had come down to inquire what those reasons were. Had not Mr. Marvell received communications from the General authorising and requesting him to pay all money in his hands for the General's use to his treasurer in London, Mr. Ashurst? The manager admitted Mr. Marvell had received them, but he was not satisfied with them. "That means," I said, "that Mr. Marvell doubts their authenticity. If they were genuine, he had no choice but to comply with them; and if he thought they were not genuine, how came it to pass that he had taken no steps in consequence? If they were not genuine, they were forgeries, and it was an attempt, being practised upon him, to obtain by forged documents money in his possession. Yet he had taken no steps to expose the forgery, or warn the subscribers or the public that he held proofs of so infamous a proceeding in his hands. The manager looked a little confused at that aspect of the question. I therefore added—"You are well aware who the persons are who have sent these fraudulent communications from the General. One is Mr. W. H. Ashurst, the Solicitor of her Majesty's Post Office, and the other is Mr. E. H. J. Craufurd, a member of Parliament, and counsel for the Mint. If they have taken to forgery, and have acquired such confidence in their success that they can venture to practise upon a banker and a magistrate, so distinguished for sagacity and public spirit as Mr. Marvell, that is a very serious thing, which ought not to be concealed from the public. The law ought to have been set in motion long ago. The Attorney-General should have been informed of the proceedings of the Solicitor of the Post Office, and the Speaker should have been made acquainted with this conduct of a member of Parliament and counsel for the Mint. If Mr. Marvell doubted the authenticity of Garibaldi's communication, he could have sent it to Count Corti, or the Marquis D'Azeglio, the Italian Minister in London, who knew the General's handwriting well, and in twenty-four hours Mr. Marvell could have taken pro-

ceedings ; but he had, now for two months or more, concealed or condoned this extraordinary and scandalous forgery. If he would give me Mr. Marvell's address, I would at once proceed there, and speak to him upon the subject."

Upon being informed of his residence, I took a cab and drove straight to his house in the suburbs, where I was received by Mrs. Marvell, who informed me that her husband was unwell, and unable to see visitors. I said in that case I would await his recovery, although the matter upon which I wished to see him was serious and of public importance. Upon her remarking that if it were a matter which I could communicate to her she might, at a convenient opportunity, mention it to him, I told her precisely what I had told the manager of the bank, which she appeared to hear with some consternation. I learned by post shortly after that Mr. Ashurst had received £411 from Mr. Marvell, the amount of all the subscriptions received by him.

I knew all the while why this banker wished to retain the money in his hands, until he had opportunity of sending it to the General himself. It was because he thought Garibaldi might direct its employment by Mazzini, who was doing everything in his power to send reinforcements into the field to aid the General. It was Mazzini who inspired the men who shed their blood under Garibaldi's standard, and not one sixpence of the money would have been used except in Garibaldi's service. It was not the province of any treasurer to dictate how money should be applied which was subscribed for services in Italy, of which he was merely the custodian, and every hour he withheld it he was in danger of imperilling Garibaldi's interest and his fortunes in the field.

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

### *FAMOUS FIGHTS.*

(1863.)

ARE science and courage a match for overwhelming strength? Can a man skilled in the art of hand-fighting overcome an antagonist immensely his superior in stature and power? I saw this done at Wadhurst in 1863.

After the fight between Sayers and Heenan it became a question whether Heenan could be beaten. He certainly was not beaten by Sayers. In his contest with Heenan, Sayers made a high name for English pluck. Seldom had a short-built David of pugilism undertaken to fight such a ponderous Goliath of Heenan's altitude. A single blow disabled Sayers's left arm. Heenan struck like a battering-ram. It implied no mean skill and pluck in Sayers to parry and return the blows of such a tremendous assailant for many rounds, in that disabled condition. Had not the ring been broken by the crowd, Heenan would have killed his adversary. A subscription was made for Sayers at the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston subscribing the first guinea. Exhaustive training, excitement of victory and subsequent excess, have death in them, and soon laid Sayers low. No contests or feats of great danger ought to be encouraged. All whose presence incites them are morally participants in self-murder, disguised as a spectacle in which the actor kills himself for renown.

Heenan having a name of international repute, I reported the last of his battles—which was with Tom King—for the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*. Washington Wilks, a journalist whom you could always trust for chivalry, represented the *Morning Star*

and we agreed to go together. I knew Mr. Feist, editor of the *Sporting Life*, whose office was next to mine in Fleet Street, and by his invitation we joined him. From him I obtained a railway ticket to the fight for £2 10s. At that time I was publishing in the *English Leader* Dr. Shorthouse's articles on the "Biology and Pedigree of Racing Horses." The Doctor afterwards continued them under the title of *The Sporting Times*. He understood his subject so well that one year he predicted the winner of the Derby, which no one else foresaw. Dr. Shorthouse, knowing I had to write an account of the fight while it was progressing, suggested that I should have a "nurse." On consulting Feist, he named Johnny Broome as my "nurse," who in consideration of a guinea, undertook to protect me from molestation probable in that belligerent society of which I was not a recognised member. The duty of a "nurse" is to secure you a good place close to the ring and to "punch anybody's head" who interferes with you. Johnny was himself a pugilist of renown. Some time later he killed himself, for which I was sorry, for he was a good fellow according to his calling. He rode with us to the fight. Feist wore a dark fur cap, which well became him, and moreover was of excellent service in a blast or a rush. When, some years later, Sir John Sinclair, M.P., sent me £5 to buy something I liked, I bought a sealskin cap like Feist's, and had it on when run over by an omnibus at Charing Cross. It kept well on my head; had I worn a hat that day it would have fallen off, and getting under the horses' feet embarrassed them in their friendly efforts not to tread upon me, in which they succeeded.

It was midnight early in December, 1863, when the fighting party assembled at the London Bridge railway station. There we hung about the waiting-rooms until word was given to take the train, which had glided noiselessly into the station. None of us knew where we were going. About five o'clock we alighted in Sussex, at a place thought convenient for the business in hand. A mounted policeman being observed by the scouts sent out, it was conjectured he might ride for aid and interfere, so we were recalled to the train and proceeded to Wadhurst, where we again alighted and started about two miles or more to the interior. Rain had fallen during the night, and the run over fences, ditches, and stiles was more

diverting than agreeable. We were a rough, strong-footed gang. The wet, clayey mounds were as slippery as hillocks of soap, and one or two noblemen, as well as others, were soon on their knees. A field was chosen and the stakes set. Tom King, though nearly as tall as Heenan, was but a handsome stripling compared with him. Both were pallid, and their lips were pale and bloodless. Experts said they were overtrained. Their flesh seemed concreted as though no blow could indent it. Heenan won the toss both for the higher ground and for the shade, and King had to take the declivity of the field with the sun in his eyes. I had a seat on the ground next the ring, in the circle of those who had paid for near places. As the excitement of the fight grew, surrounding spectators pressed down, and would have trampled on me had not the vigilant eyes of Johnny Broome been upon them, who passed the word that he was "nursing" me. That was sufficient to the wise, who knew they would have to answer to him on the spot if they incommodeed me. And those who were not wise soon became so when they were subjected to a volley of Johnny's threats, expressed in the minatory language of the Prize Ring. Otherwise I could not have maintained my place when the fury of the fight became contagious. At first King merely sparred at his great antagonist, dancing round him, alluring him to parts of the ring in shadow. This lasted some minutes. At last King struck Heenan a series of blows on mouth and face with a rapidity the like of which I had never seen. Heenan was not dazed, but amazed. Before he could get his elephantine arms into play he was again and again subjected to a rain of blows, resembling the Chinese punishment with the flat bamboo, in which short, rapid strokes produce intensity of effect. These King delivered in showers, and leaped back like a kangaroo, and Heenan was never able to retaliate effectually. The monster could have knocked his assailant over the ropes into the adjoining field could he have got a fair blow at him. But the nimble King took care this chance should not occur. Never was a more majestic figure than Heenan beheld in the ring; such splendour of strength I have never seen since in combat. As he stood up, his broad chest and massive arms were defiant, and more so his mien, as, raising erect his colossal frame, he planted his spiked boots well in the grass.

and strode down like a buffalo to his adversary, with conscious pride of power and contempt for his foe. Up till the seventh round he smiled as he met King ; but it was observed then that his smile was a squirm, as his mouth was so swollen that the laughing-lip was no more in use ; but his savage courage kept him from knowing it. After this Heenan commenced his native mode of fighting. After the battle with Sayers he said he would never again be fettered by English rules, in which his prairie prowess could not express itself. His policy was to seize his opponent, crush like a boa constrictor the strength out of him, throw him down, and fall upon him with his elbow on his neck. He did this. No doubt he could kill any single antagonist who was unable to evade his strong grip. He rushed on King, and compressed him under his arm. King was entirely helpless. He fibbed away with one arm at Heenan's back in a feeble, ineffectual way. He was thrown down and fallen on. When he was picked up his face was black. Heenan had beaten him. King could not be brought up to time. But "time" was not called according to rule. He was given more. The barbaric restoratives of the ring were applied, when he reappeared before his foe alert as a fox. Before long Heenan became blinded by King's incessant blows. By the sixteenth round we were all excited. We of the inner circle sat on the ground that the outer crowd might the better see. But the fury of the battle took possession of us. We all arose. When the combatants were on my side of the ring it seemed as though they would fall over the ropes upon us. Both fighters were raging, especially King, probably from spirit given him, but more from the madness of battle. His eagerness to get at his opponent was such that his feet were on the knees of his second and he sat upon his shoulder. Instead of being behind, he was now ready before his time. Cans of water were thrown in their faces to refresh Heenan's eyes and enable him to see King. By this time Heenan fought wildly. His senses were going under the fierce unparried blows of King. The Jupiter of the Prize Ring was beaten : overwhelming strength was defeated by science which waited for its chance and knew how to profit by it.

By that time some policemen were on the ground, more anxious to witness the fight than to prevent it. They were

too few to stop it, and they were told it would all be over before they could collect aid, which they were quite willing to believe, and made no attempt to do so. Subsequently the combatants were tried at the Lewes Sessions, but no evidence was forthcoming and they were acquitted. Yet there was no doubt of the fight. Heenan was led by his seconds to the train. Besides being unable to see his way, his strength had been so reduced that his arms were supported on the shoulders of his guides. Tom King, with scarcely a mark upon him, came gaily round the carriage windows to collect, as is the custom, a present for the loser of the battle. We made up about £25.

Accustomed to write on the railway, in boats, in cabs, and crowds, making on occasion notes on a short man's hat, whom I allowed to stand on my toes in order to raise himself higher, I had no difficulty in getting my account of the fight (two thousand words) ready for the telegraphist when I got to town. It was calculated that two thousand words were all we could then get over the wires in time for the afternoon edition. I was the first person at the telegraph office with a report of the fight. The chief of the department on seeing it, came to me to ask whether I could allow him to delay sending it on to Newcastle that he might send it to Windsor, as the Prince of Wales wished to see the first account of the fight. I answered the report was the property of the paper I represented ; I had no right in its disposal, but had no doubt Mr. Cowen would himself assent to such an act of courtesy to His Royal Highness ; but I must ask that no other account should be sent anywhere over the wires until the *Chronicle* report was despatched. My condition was assented to, and the Prince first received the description of the fight, which was at least unlike any other common in that day, or since. There was no slang of the ring in it, no technicalities of experts which confuse the general reader. My object was to give a brief, vivid account of what took place which a gentleman might peruse, and which would tell the readers of the *Chronicle* what actually took place. Prize-fighting is not necessary for the cultivation of public courage ; but the last fight of Heenan, in which science was matched against strength, was not without instruction, and not without national pride in the victory of skill.

To this day I look back with satisfaction to the Titan fight on that December morning—it was the 10th—on the plateau at Wadhurst. The passion of Newcastle-on-Tyne is for the oar, the naval sceptre of the Norse kings, but one cannot carry an oar about for inland defence—hence the Wadhurst fight had interest on the Tyne. Its purpose, its swiftness, its pluck were unexampled in my experience. Passion, pride and power struggled on both sides for mastery ; the grand gleam of disdain and conscious strength which shone in the eyes of the American Ajax during the earlier rounds was a sight not seen more than once in a generation. For fighting as Englishmen fight, King was the regal type. Sayers was King's chief second, who astonished the boxers present by appearing in a yellow shirt. English prejudice against anything new at once burst out. The colour was too glaring, but some distinctive colour was the right thing. But it was jeered down, and Sayers who never gave in at a blow was beaten by a laugh, and put on a coat over his yellow shirt. Why should not seconds be distinguished from the umpire? Were jockies to ride in their daily attire, the race for the Derby would be as dull as a run of mounted costermongers. Sayers deserved credit for the sense and courage of his picturesque device. Sayers died a year or two later, and his colossal dog lay on his master's rug on his car and was chief mourner at his grave. King died not long ago, well regarded for his character and accomplishments. Heenan is no more now, and Ada Isaacs Menken, the dreamy-eyed, spiritualistic poetess, whom we knew at the exhibition of the Davenport Brothers, and as "Mazeppa" at Astley's—who was as lovely as she was dreamy—was personally attached to the Benicia athlete—is also dead : so is Feist ; and Dr. Shorthouse, for whom I had great regard. He was a lineal descendant of Dr. Johnson's wife, who was a Shorthouse. He became an LL.D. as well as an M.D. because he was proud of his descent, and he wilfully resembled the Doctor in a rough frankness of manner ; but though he had the bear in his speech, he had an angel in his heart. He practised, when I knew him, at Carshalton, and every poor creature for miles round could command his services and his medicines, although they were never able to pay him. Once, when I was unwell, I was a guest six weeks in his house, and I saw what took place among his

poor patients, who had no other friend in their sickness. At my request Dr. Shorthouse visited many publicists who needed the skill of the physician. Though his speech was not encouraging or attractive, his kindly acts won every heart. The only time I ever engaged in sporting was when he asked me to join a sweepstake. I took two tickets, and forgot all about them. Some time after he remarked to my brother Austin that he had £50 due to some claimant who had never appeared ; and one day my brother Austin, who remembered I had tickets, looked among my papers and found that one of them was the ticket wanted, and the £50 was paid to me. Alas ! the excitement of the turf was too much for Dr. Short-house, and he died all too soon for those who had affection for him.

In my youth I had barbaric taste enough to look with favour on fighting, and had some ambition that way. Once I went out on that business. A tendon of one wrist had been cut when a boy, which lamed me for life, and otherwise I found that prize fighting was not my vocation. The war spirit, engendered by Napoleonic battles, had not abated in my youth. Shaw, the famous Life Guardsman at Waterloo, was a prize fighter. The Ring was popular in Birmingham in my time, and would be again did invasion threaten us. Phil Sampson was a local hero and, had Hammer Lane been successful in his amour, I should have been nearly related to him. The first fight I witnessed was between two women. It took place on the Old Parsonage ground, which was then open previous to its being built over. The combatants were two lusty women, between thirty and forty years old, as far as I judged. They had come from courts adjoining the open ground. Having quarrelled, they challenged each other to fight. In their neighbourhood fighting would be common, their husbands might be boxers. There were few persons about, and the women fought because they were enraged. Each was so far stripped that their bosoms and arms were bare. They had full breasts, and the strangeness of their appearance caused me to stop and look at them. They sparred in the usual way, but after a few blows they closed, and then seized each other by the hair. Some women who had become aware of the fight rushed up and parted them. There was only one round. That was the first fight I saw. I have given an account of the last.

## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

### *THE LAST LESSONS OF THE HANGMAN.*

•(1864.)

FOR fourteen years I wrote against the hangman, intending to abolish him so far as any influence I had might go—and if not abolish him repress him as a public teacher. Had I not been myself a teacher in Glasgow, and found that pupils never seemed eager to come up for instruction, I should never have felt jealousy of my successful rival, Jack Ketch, who in those days was put forward with great parade and circumstance as the chief moral teacher of the Government. I had some knowledge of murderers besides that acquired by connection with the press, through being ordered to report public executions. In the days of the *Leader* newspaper, I was required to supply an account of the hanging of a man and woman in Jail Square, Glasgow. It was then (1853) I first became envious of the success of the Professor of the Gallows in drawing crowds of scholars to his classes.

The most eminent teachers lament the indocility of mankind to receive moral impressions. They exhaust all the arts of blandishment and persuasion, and win but scant pupils and reluctant learners. All the while the Government were in possession of a secret which genius, earnestness, and solicitude had failed to discover. Exchange the blackboard of the teacher for the black cap of the judge, the desk for the gallows, and the scholars rush up in crowds ; every student is eager : you cannot count their numbers ; you require strong and far-extended barriers to restrain their impatience for instruction.

In Jail Square at an early hour of a Glasgow summer morning I found the Trongate impassable. At every angle perspiring mobs of dirty men and tattered women came down like an avalanche. Hans Smith Macfarlane and Helen Blackwood were out in Jail Square, and the operation of strangling them was about to commence. The Salt Market was wedged full of raw depravity. You could take the dimension of villainy by the square inch. The cubic measure of Scotch scoundrelism in the city of Glasgow could be ascertained that morning.

A fog hung over the city, and the approaching spectator could only discern the edge of the struggling mass in Glasgow Green. Its thick murmur resounded like the coming of the cholera cloud, said to be heard by its first victims. The vast span of the bridge adjoining Jail Square was covered with human heads, gilded by beams from the bursting sun. All beyond and before that living arch was an undefined sea of glaring life. The huge city appeared to have lined its square and streets to welcome home some national hero. The city welcomed no victor—it was regaling its villains. The Lord Provost had bestowed on the public another moralising and deterring spectacle of a public strangling ; the policeman and the gaoler profitted—and thus civilisation was advanced.

Eleven years later (in 1864) I had to report for the *Morning Star* the "public killing" (as Douglas Jerrold called hanging) of Franz Muller. That morning was devoted by the Government to public instruction by the hangman. His subject was a German murderer.

In London professional debauchery and well-fed brutality transcend in quantity that of Glasgow. Calcraft, the teacher, had announced that he should give a lesson at Newgate. A surging throng attended his summons. Housetops, windows, and streets were crowded with pupils though a heavy rain was falling. What a commonplace, contracted, unsightly, uncomfortable, hideous area is the popular schoolroom of the Old Bailey ! Well may the murderous teacher exult in the punctuality of his pupils. No Pestalozzi, no Fellenburg, no Arnold, no Key, no Temple, no De Morgan was ever able to command the painful, prompt, and spontaneous allegiance of so many scholars. Neither Cambridge nor Oxford can compare with the University of Newgate. Ratcliffe Highway, Shore-

ditch, Houndsditch, and every other ditch that harbours a thief ; Billingsgate, the Seven Dials, and the Brill of Somers Town sent their choicest representatives. The knave and the burglar had run and raced from every purlieu of the metropolis in order not to miss their Newgate lecture. The pickpocket was there. The ticket-of-leave man was present. The drunkard and the wife-beater found means to profit by this great State opportunity. The sickly, the consumptive were among the throng—defying the cold, which must be misery, and the damp, which may kill. Eager for the instruction the gallows imparts, the most vicious business is suspended. The garotter lets his intended victim pass ; the burglar leaves the shutter half splintered, and hastens on when the hangman is teaching. An influence stronger than lust, more alluring than vice, more tempting than plunder, is exercised by this seductive instructor. The condemned has been kept a fortnight within hearing of the very footstep of Death, daily coming nearer and nearer to him. He is brought out upon the scaffold. Twenty thousand strange eyes glare upon him, with hungry terror-striking warning. He is shown to the excited mob before his face is covered. The spectators see the last spark of hope die out of his soul. No reprieve has come ; no horseman rushes up to the throng ; no shout of pardon is heard ; no possible rescue, which always lingers in the mind of the doomed, occurs. The wretch stands face to face with inevitable, pitiless, pre-meditated Death, and the crowd know that he knows it. They see the frame quiver and the blood rush to the neck. A thrill passes through the congregated scoundrels whom the Government has thus undertaken to entertain. If Godfrey Kneller said he never looked upon a bad picture but he carried away a dirty tint, we may be sure that no eye looks upon the scaffold but it takes or transmits a tint of murder.

I was not much before my time in urging these arguments upon public consideration. Two days after my last letter upon the subject appeared in the *Star* (November 16, 1864), newspapers wrote against the spectacle which had never so written before. No doubt the distrust of public killing had crept into many minds. *The Times* had a leader which might be taken as a summary of my statements (so closely was it analogous to them), and admitted that public executions were disastrous in

London ; but arguing that the hangman's lessons told on those who were absent, treating the gallows as a school where only those pupils profit who do not attend ! The *Standard* afterwards published a poem strenuously deplored the effect upon the public of the appearance at the gallows of two teachers together—the Clergyman and the Strangler, the one preaching mercy and the other murder. Soon after the Grand Jury at Manchester protested against executions in that city, and advised that they should "take place within the precincts of the gaol for the hundred of Salford." This the law eventually conformed to, and public instruction by the hangman ended.

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

### *AN ADVENTURE WITH GARIBALDI.*

(1864.)

INCIDENTS when Garibaldi was at Brooke House in 1864, are worth relating. I was, by instruction, in attendance upon him. I had been since he was received at Southampton. The *Ripon*, which brought him there, was stormed by crowds of deputations and persons who, in his day of insurgency and unpopularity, never showed him friendship or sympathy, but were even among his defamers. They were all anxious now to show themselves as his friends. The only persons who displayed dignity, self-respect and knowledge of the situation were Mr. Joseph Cowen—the general's old friend in adversity—and the Duke of Sutherland. The Duke simply greeted Garibaldi, and, neither officious nor persistent, gave him an invitation to his house in London when it suited him to come, and then went away. Mr. Cowen (Garibaldi's eyes brightened as he greeted him) explained to Garibaldi the English situation, and what course would be best for Italy for him to pursue, and left him.

After I had been a week at the Isle of Wight—often seeing Garibaldi, once dining with him, and sometimes joining him in his morning walk in the gardens of Brooke House—all Mr. Seely's guests returned to England in the *Medina*. It was stated by members of Parliament on board that 100,000 men intended to file before the General at Nine Elms. As it was desirable to save him the fatigue of standing five hours while this was done, a wish was expressed that a different arrangement should be acted upon, but no one was willing to take the

responsibility of suggesting it. Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P., therefore, said to me, "Holyoake, you do it."

Not being able to understand why Mr. Forster or any one should hesitate about doing a right thing, I drew up and telegraphed to London to personal friends at the head of the proposed procession, as follows :—

"ON BOARD THE 'MEDINA',  
"10 o'clock, Monday.

"If the 100,000 persons, as reported here, are to file before the General at Nine Elms, he will have to stand five hours. He will be weary ; his entry into London will be delayed till dusk. If practicable, let the General go first, and the procession follow and defile before him at Stafford House. Nobody else here will take the responsibility of saying this, although every one wishes it said."

There was also in the train a vain Italian tradesman who put himself forward as representing the Italians in the metropolis. All the years while the English friends of Italy had been working and subscribing to promote Italian freedom, the name of this person was never heard ; nor was he ever seen at any of their meetings. He had no colour except that of an enemy of Mazzini. He had met me in the Isle of Wight, and knowing me to be in communication with Mazzini, had conceived against me hostility on that account. With the wit which small enmity sometimes has, he discerned that Mr. Seely might be acted upon. He went to him, and, speaking English, which the General and Menotti (Garibaldi's son) had but limited knowledge of, obtained from Mr. Seely authority, even using Mazzini's name, to remove me from the train on the pretence that my presence in it, on arriving at London, might compromise the General. He then informed the stationmaster, one Mr. Godson, who (an exception to railway officers) was a discourteous person, that he had Mr. Seely's authority for my removal from the train at the Micheldever Station.

As I was the representative of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* and the *Morning Star*, I had a seat in the press carriage. Menotti was with his father. Mr. Charles Seely, M.P. for Lincoln, whose guest Garibaldi had been at Brooke House, was

with them. When we arrived at the station my removal was attempted. My colleagues on the press, representing *The Star, Times, Standard, Daily News, Telegraph* and *Morning Post*, were in the same compartment with me. When Mr. Godson demanded that I should leave, not one of them resented this proceeding, though two of them had depended on me daily for information—which I alone could give them—for their journals. For one of them I had myself, at a cost of fifteen shillings, driven across the island to telegraph for his paper news in my possession which he desired to have sent; and I had lent him thirty shillings to pay his hotel bill, when he fell short of money. Neither of these sums were ever repaid. I refused to leave the train, and told Mr. Godson it was an outrage on a member of the English press.

Seeing on the platform my friend Mr. Forster, whose guest I had twice been, and who the night before had obtained from me private information of what had taken place concerning Garibaldi during the week he had spent in the Isle of Wight, I felt sure of friendly interference. Stepping out of the carriage, I told him what was being done, and said, "Please speak to Mr. Godson, and tell him that an English member of the press cannot be removed from a public train at the instigation of a foreigner. A word from you, a member of Parliament, will prevent this." He turned away, however, saying, "he could not interfere." I saw then that he knew all about it, and was a party to it.

The stationmaster, seeing Mr. Forster turn away, prevented me from returning to the carriage. Baffled thus, I would have opened the General's carriage door, and leaped in. I well knew he would never allow me to be removed, as I was the representative of the paper of Mr. Cowen, his earliest and greatest English friend. But this would have caused a scene. It would have got into the papers, and been taken advantage of by the enemies of the Italian cause. So I said to Mr. Godson that, "as the objection was to my entering London in the train of the General, I would give my word that I would leave the train at Nine Elms." I was then allowed to return to my carriage.

When we arrived at Nine Elms, I did what I could to fulfil my promise; first waiting until the General and all other persons

had passed out. Then I found the station in possession of the police, who informed me they had orders to prevent any one going out save through the station exit. In a minute I was nearly under horses' feet in the midst of the mighty throng. Here I found a number of carriages waiting. I was invited by the Garibaldi Committee to take a seat with them, but I preferred the private carriage of a friend, having first procured a seat for Basso, who was in attendance upon Garibaldi. I had met Basso in company with Menotti. Not knowing a word of English, he was hopelessly lost amid the half million of people who lined the streets between Nine Elms and Pall Mall.

Without perceiving it, the carriage I had chosen was next to the General's, and thus, without any intention of my own, I rode right before Garibaldi, in the centre of the mighty throng which lined the road all the way to the Duke of Sutherland's.

The conduct of the eccentric Italian was all the more preposterous, since I was elected at a large meeting of the London Tavern on the same reception committee as himself, and I had as much right to prevent him appearing in the General's train as he had to prevent me. Yet this man, who never rendered assistance nor made sacrifice in any of those enterprises which had built up Garibaldi's reputation, now thrust himself forward, even to the exclusion of Menotti from his father's carriage, taking his seat himself.

Mr. Washington Wilks, who was in the train on the part of the *Morning Star*, was the only gentleman among the reporters of the press present. His chivalry towards me I have never forgotten. He expressed his contempt for my press colleagues in the carriage, because of their cowardly silence when I was attacked in their company. Afterwards, when some of them went abroad for their papers in the Franco-German war, and met with outrage in a country in which they were foreigners, at the hands of the inhabitants who had a right to object to them, they had reason to remember their own conduct in tolerating and conniving at an outrage instigated by a foreigner in their own country. When it came to their turn, they sent home shrieks to the Foreign Office for protection.

Mr. Wilks went down to the House of Commons the same night. Mr. Forster told me that he attacked him with fury in the lobby, and Mr. Seely also. Mr. Forster assumed not to

know what the occasion of his resentment was. The proprietor of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, with his customary public spirit, at once made known the personal indignation with which he regarded this interference with its representative. The *Morning Star*, as might be expected from its independence, held the same tone. The editor of the *Daily News* was prompt to animadvert upon the proceeding in its columns, not knowing that its own reporter, to whom I had twice supplied information, connived at it.

When Mazzini heard that his name had been used for a pretext for the proceeding recounted, he at once sent me the following letter :—

“April 22, 1864.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is with a deep regret and sense of humiliation for Italy that I have heard of the uncourteous, ungentlemanly, ungrateful conduct of an Italian towards you. I have written to him [Negretti] that he has offended me, too, through the unwarranted use of my name. Let me apologise for him to you. If he was different from what he is, I might proceed further, and insist on his apologising to you. But he is, in intellect, tendencies, and manners, belonging to that class of men whom I call ‘irresponsible.’ Forget him, and be contented with knowing that I and we all are, not only esteeming and loving you, but grateful for your efforts in our cause.—

Ever faithfully yours,

JOSEPH MAZZINI.”

In justice to the Italian nation, it ought to be said that every public man who became acquainted with the facts volunteered his personal regret. Guerzoni, Major Woolf, and others were foremost. On the day that his illustrious father visited the House of Commons, Menotti stepped across the lobby, from the side of the Earl of Shaftesbury, with whom he was conversing, to stand by me and show by that act his disapprobation of the occurrence. It is due to Italians to say that the outrage Menotti resented was the act of a single “irresponsible” Italian.

The outrage was aimed at Mazzini (whose name had been treacherously used), who could not be reached, and in whose place it was an honour to stand. But the professional consequences were a very different affair. A newspaper proprietor would have on important occasions to despatch another repre-

sentative to accompany me, to take my place when under arrest, which would not conduce to engagements.

When Garibaldi learned what had occurred, his indignation was unmeasured. My friend Mr. James Stansfeld, to whom meanness or cowardice of any kind was instinctively abhorrent, did not conceal from Mr. Forster or Mr. Seely his opinion of their conduct at Micheldever.

Mr. Seely was really a generous, kind-hearted man, but without strength of intellectual conviction. I have seen him come out of the House of Commons, and finding in the lobby two Chartist agitators without means necessary for their work, give a £5 note to each. He joined with Mr. Forster and Mr. Mundella in providing permanent means of comfort in his declining years for another Chartist, Thomas Cooper, whose honesty and ability they knew ; and Colonel Seely, with the same honourable kindness, continued the payment after his father's death. I wrote to Mr. Seely to ask for an explanation, whether he had given authority for my removal from the train. Mr. Seely gave no denial, but drove over to my house and left word with my son, I being out, that he wished me to call on him and talk the matter over. This I declined, as "no private word was a compensation for a public affront." I wrote to him saying :—

"Either you were a party to the outrage upon me or you were not. If you were, why should you hesitate to say so ? Mr. ——, whom you authorise to write to me, fixes upon you as the authority under which he acted. I always understood that an English gentleman neither did a wrong nor suffered the imputation of sanctioning it ; his pride dictated, if his honour did not, instant reparation. Had not you and your confederate calculated that my independent opinions would prevent me having friends to publicly take my part, you had not ventured to treat me thus—neither he by his act, nor you by your silence."

Shortly afterwards Mr. Forster again met me at the House of Commons, when he mentioned Mr. Wilks's vehemence to him, and said he had no power to interfere with the arrangement of the train. I answered, "That was not it, Mr. Forster ; you did not want to know me in public. I did not ask you to

know me—I did not appeal to you as a friend. I addressed you as I would any other member of Parliament whom I knew to be such. I claimed, as a stranger might, your political protection of my civil right, and you refused it. Had it been Mr. Newdegate who, though Tory and Churchman, was passing as you were, and I had claimed his interference, he would have stopped twenty trains before he would have permitted an Englishman to be seized and detained at the instigation of a foreigner." Mr. Forster spoke some general words of regret, and hoped I would dismiss the subject from my mind. On leaving me, he offered me his hand, which I took, because I had memory of his former courtesy, and had been his guest ; but I addressed him no more for twenty years.

At the end of his Irish Secretaryship, and when he had volunteered to go back after the murder of Mr. Burke and Lord F. Cavendish, notwithstanding the many perils of assassination through which he had himself passed, I again conceived a great admiration of his courage and noble spirit of duty. I was proud that an Englishman should show these qualities. For when intimidation or murder is attempted, it is not English to submit to it, and not English to give in, and I forgot and forgave everything. One night at the House of Commons, as I was standing in the lobby, Mr. Forster came by. I assured him I had honour for his courage, and was glad that adversaries he had tried to serve had not succeeded in killing him. He said "They certainly did their best." He asked kindly after Mr. Thomas Cooper and the comforts of his home, of which I gave him an account. We parted friends again, and remained so all his days, and he saw many proofs in the press of my regard for him.

In accepting the office of Irish Secretary in succession to Lord Cavendish, Mr. George Otto Trevelyan was in one sense yet more to be honoured. Mr. Forster was naturally indifferent to danger, and rather liked it. Mr. Trevelyan was less adventurous by nature. His was the courage of duty ; he was intrepid by force of will. One night when I spoke to him of the manner in which he had undertaken the Irish Secretaryship he appeared gratified, and added lightly, "They do not particularly wish to kill me, but to make a protest against English rule." "Yes," I rejoined ; "but it is not particularly pleasant to be the subject of the protest"—at which he went away laughing.

## CHAPTER LXXX.

### *UNPUBLISHED INCIDENTS IN THE CAREER OF W. E. FORSTER.*

(1864.)

MR. FORSTER has been described mainly by those who happened to agree with him in the respects in which he was wrong, saving Mr. Justin McCarthy, who, differing from him discerningly, gave, in an article in the *Contemporary* for August, 1888, a true impression of him.

Mr. Forster was ambitious, and without recognising that there is no understanding him. Ambition was stronger in him than any other sentiment. Humanity and liberal principles were, to the end of his days, characteristic of him, and he preferred advancing his personal ascendancy by these means ; but they had not the personal dominion over him that ambition had.

When I first knew him he gave me this impression. He did not profess to share my opinions, but he had an inquiring mind, and wished to know what the opinions of others were, and on what they were founded. Had he not been of a liberal and just mind himself, he would not have cared to know such views as I held. His choice would have been not to know them. He would have judged them without knowing them. Because Mr. Forster was friendly to me, I never assumed that he agreed with me. I never assume this of any one, unless he tells me so. It would make friendship impossible with independent thinkers, if it were held to imply coincidence of ideas.

Mr. Forster told me at that time the nature of his opinions on education. Had he likewise told his friends in Bradford,

and they had understood him as I did, they would not have been disappointed in their reliance on his educational policy, as they would never have had any expectation of his going in the direction they wished.

What he said to me was—"Those who stand at the head of society and argue that the minds of the people must be left alone or they will break loose from the religious ties which are supposed to bind them, and drift away no one knows whither, must take a new course, as the people are already free from those ties; and they who mean to guide them must guide them speedily, or some one else will do it for them."

Mr. Forster had been present at lectures and discussions in which I took part. He was surprised very much to see that the majority of large meetings were entirely in sympathy with what were then regarded as the heretical views submitted to them. He was then quite resolved, should he attain power, that the authority of the State Church should be the agent of national religious instruction. My impression was that his marriage with Dr. Arnold's daughter further excited his ambition to serve the ends of the Church.

In my time I have seen many men treat every principle in which they were interested as subordinate to ambition. Also, I have seen opponents who, disliking the ambition, shut their eyes to every other quality the ambitious man had, and overlook the services he might render to right principles when they did not interfere with his personal ends. I have known many men promote movements they did not much care for, their object being to obtain influence in them in favour of some view of their own. Thus the recruiting sergeant will have honest admiration of a straight, well-made man, because he has the qualities of a soldier in him. The sergeant will be civil to such a man, will praise him, will take an interest in him, and even desire his welfare from a professional point of view; but his main object all the while is to enlist him.

Thus the Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice took interest in co-operation, not because he cared for it for its own sake. As he said himself, "His great wish was to Christianise Socialism, not Christian-socialise the universe." So far as co-operation infused morality into trade Mr. Maurice did care for it, and his sympathy was of great service to it. I have known many

Christians, whose ability and good feeling commanded regard, take part in social and political efforts, without caring intrinsically for them ; but, as Comtists do in like cases, they sympathised to what extent they can from quite a different motive from that which inspires those whom they serve. It would, however, be most unjust to many not of my way of thinking to conceal my knowledge that they do often promote the interests of others without any considerations of their own. For myself, I never cared one jot whether the persons whose movements I promoted adopted my views or not. I never, with a view to their adopting my views, treated Christians with fairness and respect, or spoke with courtesy to them. I acted so solely because courtesy, fairness, justice, and discernment of the good qualities of others were right principles in themselves, and should for their own sake be observed towards all persons, whether adversaries or friends.

A fortnight before his marriage Mr. Forster had driven me over to Burley for a night's conversation. We did not set out until after my lecture that night in Bradford. Burley was ten or more miles away. We had a fine high-stepping horse ; the night was dark, and the roads were steep. Never before nor since have I ridden with any one who drove so furiously as Mr. Forster. I fully expected to be found next morning distributed on the wayside banks between Bradford and Burley. The anecdote of Mr. Forster's dare-devil driving which Mr. Wemyss Reid relates in his "Life" of Mr. Forster accords with my experience.

Shortly after his marriage, I was again a guest at Burley. Mrs. Forster appeared to me a pretty and gentle lady—in every way a contrast to her tall and energetic husband. She lent me the travels of Huc and Gabet in Tartary, which has seemed to me, ever since, one of the brightest of all books of missionary adventures. She walked by my side as we went down to dinner. Being a stranger, and diffident, I did not offer her my arm, doubtful whether it might not be presuming. Afterwards I asked Miss Martineau what I was free to do under such circumstances. With that ready condescension and instructiveness, always a conspicuous grace in her, she wrote me a letter of great interest, telling me that, being a guest, I was for the time being an equal, and might have complied

with the opportunities of the hour with propriety. Some time previous to Mr. Forster's death I mentioned the letter to him, and he asked me to let him see it, but some person who admired it had retained it.

In a town of influence where the question of education was much discussed, Mr. Forster one day sought an interview with the leaders whose influence might facilitate his entrance to the Cabinet. He had a communication to make of importance, it was said. Those interested in hearing it were present in assembly. Mr. Forster suggested that it would be better not to have reporters present, as what he wanted to say might, in the hands of adversaries, produce obstacles. The communication was made, and filled the little assembly with enthusiasm for the ascendancy of one so likely to carry their wishes into legislation. When Mr. Forster obtained the position in which he could give effect to what he was understood to have in his mind, his proposal and his speeches did not correspond with the expectations entertained by his hearers. They thought they might have misunderstood him, and were about to refer to some independent record of what he did say, when they remembered his objection to reporters being present. The impression they had, therefore, was that they had been outwitted ; and they certainly thought that what appeared reasonable diplomatic precaution was a trick. Whether they ever wrote to Mr. Forster to ask him what he did say, I know not. They probably distrusted him then so much that they thought the proceeding futile. Mr. Forster was a man of truth, and would probably have answered frankly, as he was not lacking in courage to stand by what he had thought proper to do. Judging of Mr. Forster by his antecedents, they might have interpreted his words through his character and Nonconformist predilections, while his actual words might have admitted of the interpretation he put upon them. But the indignation with which the narrative was related to me by one who was present showed that the impression was strong that they had been deceived, and that they had used influence they never would have exercised had they understood what was afterwards to happen.

I was in the House when Mr. Forster made his declaration that "he had Puritan blood in his veins." He held out his

arm as he spoke, as though he would bare it that the House might see the blood throbbing. I said at the time, to a member who was speaking to me, that if Mr. Forster would put a drop of that Puritan blood into his bill, his adversaries would all be satisfied. Afterwards I asked Professor Huxley or Professor Tyndal to get a drop of that Puritan fluid and analyse it, to see if some adulteration were not present.

Soon after, at a large deputation of Nonconformist ministers at Downing Street, Mr. Forster put to them the plain question whether, as the character of religious education to be given in Board Schools seemed to present irreconcilable difficulties, they were prepared to give education without the Bible. There was an immediate and general response "without." Mr. Forster in the House described this deputation of three hundred Nonconformist ministers as though they were three hundred infidels ; though any one of them had stronger religious convictions than Mr. Forster, who said at the same time that "there was no Church which satisfied him to which he could attach himself." It was this rancorous tone on the part of Mr. Forster, unbecoming in a Minister and unseemly in him, which embittered the controversy. He might have said that it was a question between no national education at all and the concessions he made to the ascendancy of the Church ; and that he would have done better if he could, but he thought so much of national education that we had better have it, and leave the Church to manipulate it, than to be without it. This would have justified Mr. Forster. Such a policy might have been the necessity of statesmanship. Nonconformists might have thought Mr. Forster wanting in judgment in not better interpreting the temper or liberalism of the nation, but there would have been no abiding anger, and he would never have forfeited the personal respect of his adversaries of another way of thinking. Mr. Forster did not do this. He said he would not do other than he did if he could. He spoke in Parliament in terms which seemed intended to elicit the applause of the ancient enemies of Nonconformists, and at times spoke of Nonconformists as unpleasantly as ever they did of him. They spoke in defence of their traditional principle, and he spoke in defence of his departure from it. This came from his early Quaker training, which made resentment in him more determined and

persistent than in other Christians, for reasons which I explain elsewhere in the chapter on Mr. Bright.

To give ascendancy to the Church as against the Nonconformists, and say he "would not do better if he could," took all his neighbours and supporters by surprise. Their familiar friend, whom they had placed where he was, was henceforth to them a man of almost unknown principles.

When the election came again he refused to trust those who had trusted him, and appealed to the Tories whose interest he had served, and who had done their best to keep him out of Parliament. This was neither chivalry nor gratitude, nor cordiality to those who had been his friends when other friends he had none. If they were less enthusiastic for him than heretofore, it was not he who could reproach them. Mr. Forster had his reasons, and they the disappointment. A man cannot command trust and not reciprocate it. One bold, frank, generous speech such as Mr. Forster at other times was capable of, would have bound his old constituents to him all his days.

Towards the close of his career, he made a speech, or gave some vote, the effect of which was hostile to Mr. Gladstone, or was so interpreted by the Tories. I was given to understand by a confidential friend of his that Mr. Forster regretted this. This was like his real self, whose instincts were liberal. One of his last speeches in Bradford was too plaintive, and made too much of the "anxieties" of statesmanship. He went to Ireland, he said, with a "heavy heart," and he had more reason for disquietude than we know. Yet it is the commonplace experience of statesmanship to find difficulties. To have a "heavy heart" about it is entirely a waste of time. Unpleasantnesses fall to every statesman who does his duty. One half of his friends will complain of him not going far enough; the other half for going too far; and his adversaries will denounce him whichever way he goes, and not less if he stands still. However, Mr. Forster made it clear that, while Liberal Irish advocates were denouncing him for considering landlord interests, the landlords denounced him because he was utterly neglecting them. They were right; Mr. Forster in his heart was always with the people.

I was myself of Mr. Forster's opinion that a law should be

enforced against crime that was clearly crime. It seemed to me that Irish Americans were attempting to run secession in Ireland, as they had tried to do in America—out of spite to England, and not unnaturally, so long as Nationalist aspiration was regarded as a form of crime. The more a Minister exerted himself and conferred upon them local benefits to divert their minds from nationality, amelioration seemed hateful to them. The Chartist in England manifested precisely the same spirit when they were offered ameliorative measures to divert their minds from enfranchisement. When the Irish were generally enfranchised, and they sent eighty-six members to represent the national demand for self-government, and Mr. Gladstone showed that that was possible without separation, the Irish people became our friends, and no longer desired separation. The offer of substantial independence cancelled the hatred and distrust of seven centuries.

One day, when the agitation for a real Reform Bill in England was in progress, a conference was held in Leeds to promote it. A gentleman entered the room who had spent more money than any man in England to bring it to pass. His mode of attire was far from fashionable. He despised fashion—but he cared for service. Seeing Mr. Forster, whose political interests he had strenuously promoted, he went up to him first to greet him. Whether it was that Mr. Forster thought a further acquaintance unimportant, or whether he did not care to identify himself with a man of the determined views his friend was known to entertain, Mr. Forster took no notice of him. Mr. Bright at once rose to greet the unimportant looking delegate. Then Mr. Forster went over and offered his hand, which the repulsed delegate in his turn declined to take, long afterwards entertaining contempt for Mr. Forster. Many years later, when both were members of Parliament, I was with the delegate at Wimbledon Station when Mr. Forster stood there in volunteer uniform waiting for a train; but my friend kept me in conversation, walking up and down the platform lest Mr. Forster, to whom he would not speak, should accost him. For some reason I never knew, my friend afterwards became reconciled to him. Something inexplicable had been explained.

When I was in frequent communication with Mr. Forster, he passed me by without notice when I stood by accident in

his way. When I came to know that Mr. Forster was short-sighted, I thought this explained much ; men engrossed in thought will often pass by persons without seeing them, and, if short-sighted, may do this without knowing it. Many persons are indignant at being slighted when no slight is intended. If we only knew everything, many men would be acquitted who are now condemned.

In 1875, when an annuity was given me, there appeared in the list, "An Old Friend," £20. I asked who that was, but was told I was not to know. After Mr. Forster's death Major Bell told me the "Old Friend" was Mr. Forster. I never experienced any act more delicate and generous than this. It was during our feud when he sent the subscription which he suspected I should refuse if I knew who gave it ; or he might think that if I knew I might regard it as intended to mitigate my anger against him. He was too manly to incur that suspicion. But he wished to serve me, and took a way of doing it which I could neither resent nor acknowledge. When I learned this I was glad we had become friends, and that I had done him some service in his later years, which he acknowledged in a letter he sent me from Torquay shortly before his death.

## CHAPTER LXXXI.

### *NAPOLEON III. IN LONDON.*

(1865.)

LANDOR's injunction—"Watch him and wait"—was followed both by the Government and the people. Every year Louis Napoleon was on the throne of France it cost us millions a year to watch him, since no Bonaparte was to be trusted. Palmerston, though a comrade of the false President, never trusted him. The people waited, and they saw him twice—once a visitor and then a fugitive. Had a bill been passed for giving up Dr. Bernard, no Royal exile had any more found peace on these shores.

When the Queen went to Paris on a visit to the Emperor, I was instructed by the *Leader* to proceed there and report the features of the Royal journey. I then saw the Emperor for the first time. He was smoking a cigar on a verandah in Boulogne. His 70,000 troops were massed for review below, awaiting the arrival of the Queen. The Emperor was then in the prime of his usurpation. The next time I saw him it was before my door in Fleet Street, where he stopped some time and read some placards which interested him, and which met his inquiring eye.

It came about in this wise. He was then on a visit to the Queen in London. Great preparations had been made for his safety, as he had not many friends in the metropolis, and the natural anxiety of the Court was that nothing unpleasant should happen to him on that occasion. In those days Daniel Whittle Harvey was Commissioner of Police in the City of London, and things were always pleasant between the City

police and the people. The City police always treated the working class as citizens, and as such entitled to protection in their political processions ; whereas Sir Richard Mayne, as all Metropolitan Commissioners do, treated the working class as a criminal class, and more frequently attacked them than assisted them. Commissioner Harvey, therefore, knew he could count upon the good-will of the people in any regulation he wished observed. Sir Richard Mayne had no such ground of confidence ; and, on the night before the arrival of the Emperor, he and Commissioner Harvey met together on horseback in Fleet Street before my publishing house, to consult as to what they should do with regard to it. They suspected that some unpleasant persons might be within who had good reasons not to be amiable towards the Emperor. Police agents had been to me several times, making inquiries, which I answered in a manner calculated to satisfy them that they need be under no apprehension on my account. I said I regarded the French Emperor as the guest of the nation, and should oppose any courtesy being shown to him while he appeared in that character. At that time Mazzini and Professor Francis William Newman were both contributors to the *Reasoner*, and, with the "courage of conviction" characteristic of them, permitted me to make the announcement. It happened that their names appeared in large red letters on a placard which stretched across the fanlight of my door. The question discussed by the two Commissioners when they met, was whether I should be asked to take that placard down, lest it might meet the eye of the Emperor and produce disquietude in his mind. Mazzini had addressed an eloquent and indignant "Letter to Louis Napoleon" which had not contributed to his peace of mind. The Commissioners came to the conclusion that they had no right to ask me to take down a business placard, and, next, they did not think I should do it if they did. Commissioner Harvey respected City independence.

The next day the Emperor duly came by, accompanied by guards, and seated in a carriage said to be lined with plates of steel, lest a stray shot from some Fieschi might strike the panel. There was a great throng in the street, and every house had its windows let to curious and other spectators. I gave orders that my house should be closed as on Sundays, and that no

persons employed in it should appear at the windows. I would show the unwelcome visitor no active disrespect, neither would I show him any attention, and least of all any jubilation. It happened that at that time Mr. Samuel Bright, brother of John Bright, was at the office of *Diogenes*, with which he was connected. It had a window in Fleet Street, but he did not wish to appear there, and he came over with his pretty wife, to whom he had not long been married, to ask me if I would allow them to see the Emperor from my window. This was contrary to the rule I had laid down ; but as I had been his guest at Spotland, I could not refuse him. He had just returned from the Continent. He had a dark flowing beard, and wore a high Hungarian hat, and might be mistaken for a brigand or for the heir-at-law of William Tell. As he sat on the windowsill he certainly looked a suspicious person. The Emperor could not fail to see him as he glanced up the street. The moment he arrived opposite Mr. Bright, his horses reared and the carriage suddenly stopped. The air was filled with thousands of pieces of white paper, like a heavy snowstorm. This sudden descent of floating, flickering flakes had frightened the horses. Not knowing what could be the matter, the Emperor looked for a moment out of the carriage at the house, and then his eye met the name of Mazzini in red letters, which was not reassuring. In a minute the horses were calmed, and the procession passed on.

The next house to mine was the office of the *Sporting Life*, then a new journal. Mr. Feist had printed 50,000 small bills announcing the paper, and the printers were out on the house-top showering them down on the procession. It was this that caused the procession to stop. It was odd that it should have occurred before my door.

There were many patriots very indignant at the Queen for kissing the Emperor on his arrival, and they said so in the newspapers. It might be a regal ceremony, but it was not pleasant to think of. It was bad enough to have such a visitor, but to kiss "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence" was worse. It made people think that Royalty was unfortunate, or was not fastidious.

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

### *VISITS FROM A MURDERER.*

(1865.)

WHEN I had chambers in Cockspur Street, London, a man called upon me several times who stated himself to be "Ernest W. Southey." His real name was Stephen Forward. I suppose, from what I afterwards knew of his character, that he had taken the name of "Southey" as more imposing, and as suggesting that he was a possible relative of the poet; but his proper name, Forward, much better suited his disposition. He was a somewhat handsome man, with a glistening, feverish eye. He had a grievance which he represented was against Lord Dudley. So far as my visitor was known to have an occupation, it was that of a billiard-marker at some hotel in Brighton. His story was that Lord Dudley, being there, had sometimes played with him (which he might have done for practice when he found no one else at hand, Forward being an intelligent person). His account was that Lord Dudley played him a match for £1,000, and of course lost it. He refused to pay it. If Forward had lost, it is quite clear he could never have paid it; and it is not supposable that his lordship would play a match for such a sum with a billiard-marker who had no money. His primary grievance was the claim for this debt of honour. Afterwards he went down to Witley Court, Worcestershire, Lord Dudley's country seat, with a person professing to be his wife, and demanded of Lord Dudley the billiard money. In the end, a charge was brought against Lord Dudley of accosting the woman in the Court grounds and making some improper overtures to her. The case was heard

at the local police court, and, being without any foundation, was dismissed. As "Southey" pressed his tale of distress upon me, I procured him some aid from friends, and sometimes met him in the lobby of the House of Commons. He had written to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Russell, representing he was in distress and should commit some dreadful crime unless he had assistance. Earl Russell gave him five pounds. One day, after a protracted visit, he told me that, since he could not get his £1,000 from Lord Dudley, he should murder his wife and children. I told him that "it was very absurd to kill them because of the fault of another. The logical thing was to go and kill Lord Dudley!" My impression was that a man who talked of killing people was not at all likely to do it. Great was my astonishment when, a few days later, I found from the newspapers that he had killed seven persons—his wife and six children. Five children of his by another person he took to a coffee-house off Holborn, and poisoned the whole of them in one night. Then he went down to Ramsgate, and killed his wife, who resided there, and one of two children whom she provided for. The other child fortunately escaped.

His object was to make a great sensation by a great crime. Tropmann in France had obtained notoriety even in the English press in this way. "Southey" coveted this sort of attention. He knew that any one who perpetrated a murderous atrocity could depend upon having his statements and remarks published in the newspapers. He knew that ladies, who forgot that their sympathies were due to the unhappy victims or their unhappy relatives, sent delicacies to the cells of famous murderers. Clergymen were assiduous in their attentions to them, and promised them certain and early admission to Paradise. This notoriety and distinguished attention induced Forward to qualify himself for them. I thought it impossible, until I knew him, that any man would sacrifice his life for this brief and perilous applause. I remembered afterwards that he had said that he thought it would be "a fine thing to call attention to the injustice of society," which neglected persons in his condition—meaning the hard-heartedness of gentlemen who would not give money to an intelligent man who was not willing to work. I understood too late that killing his wife and children was the "fine thing" he had in his mind.

After he had committed the crime, he wrote to me from Sandwich Gaol inviting me, as "a leader of enlightened opinion, and connected with the press," to come down and see him early, as I might thereby "serve my own interests by striking a blow at the hypocrisies and superstitions of the country." He informed me that "he was aiding, as far as he could, in the work in which I was engaged"—that was, any one would think, murdering innocent persons wholesale! His desire was, he said, "to obtain respect for the class of opinions we mutually hold." This monstrous letter I knew would be read by the governor of the gaol before he despatched it to me. I read it with indignation, as the governor must have regarded me as a confederate abroad, engaged in the atrocious propagation of opinion by blood. The following are copies of his letter, and the reply which I returned to it :—

"PRISON HOUSE, SANDWICH,  
"Sunday, August 13, 1865.

"SIR,—As a leader of enlightened opinions, as an advocate of the abolition of capital punishment, as a man connected with the press and publishing houses, if you would run down here and see me at an early opportunity, I assure you you might find such an opportunity of serving your own interests, as well as an opportunity of striking a great blow against the hypocrisies, superstitions, and ignorance of the country, such as you could not estimate. I ask you to send me a line, for I am aiding so far as I can in the work you are also engaged in, and with help I may be enabled to assist in obtaining respect for that class of opinion we mutually hold, and which I should be sorry to be the means of bringing into disrepute.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully, ERNEST W. SOUTHEY."

"20, COCKSPUR STREET, LONDON, S.W.,  
"August 14, 1865.

"MR. STEPHEN FORWARD.

"SIR,—I am reluctant to kick a man when he is down, even though he be a murderer ; but the letter you send me strongly inclines me to do it. I am sorry to give you pain, unless I could increase the deep remorse which I trust you are beginning to feel for the frightful guilt you have incurred. I can have

no 'interest' to serve by seeing you. Were you innocent, I would not try to make anything out of your misfortunes, and I scorn to do it out of your crimes. I know not what you mean by 'opinions' we mutually hold. I knew you had a grievance, and I was sorry to hear you say your family were suffering. You came to me a stranger. I never saw you but four times. I treated you kindly, because I thought your mind unhinged. When I last saw you at the House of Commons I counselled you to dismiss the idea of suicide from your mind, and with your busy intelligence not to be afraid of honest work to extricate yourself. Don't write to me any more. Your prate about justice must end, now you have imbrued your hands in blood. I can only feel sorrow for you if you show contrition.

G. J. HOLYOAKE."

The vain scoundrel did not attempt to kill the mother of the five children whom he put to death, probably because she was inaccessible, being out at work earning means to feed the poor things. The wife who was keeping, by her own industry, her two deserted children he did kill, and one of the little ones. The knave had religious belief, and carried a Bible in his pocket. It may be that he pretended to be a Christian, as he pretended to be of my opinions, with a view to obtain money and notice.

Afterwards I reflected that, had he acted on my preferential suggestion, and killed Lord Dudley, and said that I had advised it, it had been unpleasant for me. He murdered for publicity. It was a frightful taste, but it was his. Madame Tussaud put the scoundrel in her Chamber of Horrors. It was his grim ambition to figure there.

On the last Sunday before his execution, he arose in the chapel, and addressed his fellow-criminals there assembled. No murderer before had thought of this expedient for obtaining notice in the press. There is no doubt "Southey" would make a speech in the infernal regions if they would condescend to hear him there, and he thought the Satanic reporters would publish it. When on the scaffold he had the impudence to stop the chaplain in the prayer he was reading, and request him to say only what he would dictate, which the compliant chaplain did. It was imprudent in the chaplain to consent,

for "Southey" might have said something which it would be unbecoming in a clergyman to repeat, and an altercation with a man with a noose round his neck would not have been edifying. He had the effrontery to make the chaplain "commend him, his brother, to God who had redeemed him." Not even the gallows could repress his lust of notoriety.

Wherever I could I called attention in the press to the evil effects of publicity at that time accorded to murderers; as I had previously written against hanging in sight of a crowd of Russians, who were afforded the gratification of "assisting" at murder without responsibility. Forward's trial was but briefly mentioned in the newspapers, and less distinction has since been accorded to murderers.

A writer, signing himself "H. B. Dudley," wrote to the *Newcastle Chronicle*, apparently with authority, to explain that the gentleman who played with "Southey" was a "relative" of Lord Dudley, whom Southey understood to be Lord Dudley. I wrote to "H. B. Dudley," who professed to have written "without consulting any member of the late lord's family," for such authentication as would warrant me in making corrections due to the late lord. But no answer came. Nor did Lord Dudley himself question my statement, which I sent to him at the time.

## CHAPTER LXXXIII.

### *AMONG THE FISHERMEN OF CROMER.*

(1867.)

IT is at once incredible and amusing to contemplate the primeval spiritual subjugation which parts of this little island are still under. I was wandering in 1867 on the stormy coast of Cromer. The boisterous sea visible there was once covered by cliff and forest. Druidical temples, Aryan altars, villages and churches had all been beaten down by the fierce waters which now roll over their sites. The noble church of lofty arches and majestic towers which now stands in Cromer would have been swept away ere now had not a stout sea wall protected it. The great ocean, being free, had no doubt suggested to the inhabitants round about that thought ought to be free also. I had never been in the place, but on the morning of my arrival it was noised abroad that I was the guest of a Quaker of repute thereabout. On Sunday I attended church. In a new town I take the first opportunity of hearing the most distinguished preacher in it. Preachers of different denominations often utter noble sentiments in a noble way, and hearing them enables one better to appreciate the eclecticism of piety. The preacher at the church was a greyheaded, dignified ecclesiastic in the maturity of his powers. He was a dean who preached. He said that there was a class of persons of high character, of perfect intellectual probity, who had that living morality which bound society together. Yet they professed not the Christian name. Nevertheless, it must be observed that, while morality bound man to the world, it was spiritual life which bound man to God. The sentences were clearly cut, as though chiselled by the hand of Woolner. Nor were the sentiments taken back

again in any part of the discourse, as is often the case with some preachers. One often hears a fine concession at the beginning of a sermon which is explained away at the conclusion.

The next day it was represented to me that many inhabitants of the town, and especially the fishermen, would like to hear from me a lecture on the "Orators of the English Parliament." A messenger was sent miles away to the nearest printing press, and early next morning, as I went down to the beach, I found neat little placards in every shop window announcing my lecture for the evening. In some windows which faced the town two ways, placards were exhibited on each, announcing that I would speak in the evening. Outside the Bible Society's Depôt one of the bills appeared. So amicable was everything, I thought I had alighted in an unfrequented corner of the Millennium! The fishermen's room was readily granted by two of them who had authority over it. It was in that room that an eminent member of Parliament, Charles Buxton, used to deliver annual summaries of Parliamentary proceedings, which ranked among the classics of political criticism. He was dead then; and a memorial window of great beauty of colour and design, which I was told cost a thousand guineas, had been put up in Cromer Church to his memory. The clouded and chastened light which passed through the window recalled those fine sentiments he used to express, in which philosophy had softened and variegated the fierce light of the controversies of his day.

Before noon a great change had come over Cromer; there was consternation in the place. Muffled whisperings were heard behind every counter. The vicar had been in the town. The bill on the Bible Society's door had attracted his attention. He did not know me, but he knew I was not one of the apostles. Though my name is partly Biblical, the vicar had the announcement bearing it removed. He went to the shopkeepers and requested them to take the bills from their windows, and not to go to the lecture. He admitted my subject was not in itself objectionable, but then I might say something else in speaking upon it. He was told that I regarded it as a breach of faith to announce one subject, and, after inciting people to come to hear that, to speak upon another. Whether the vicar was con-

vinced, I know not ; but, as he did not call again at the places he visited to reverse his request, the bills were not replaced, and by the afternoon not a single copy was to be seen anywhere in the town. Had Mr. Buxton, whose guest I had been, been living at hand, things would have been different.

In the meantime I composed, in case the fishermen had a choir, a variation of one of Byron's Hebrew Melodies—beginning, as they say in chapel, at the second verse :—

“ Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,  
Placards in the windows at sunrise were seen ;  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown,  
The placards at sunset lay withered and strown.

The vicar of Cromer came in with the blast,  
And spoke at the door of each shop as he past ;  
And the hearts of the keepers waxed deadly and chill ;  
Their souls but once heaved and thenceforward grew still.”

When I returned from a tour of inspection, I sent word to the fishermen who had let their rooms to me, that if they thought anything would happen to their families through their act, they were quite at liberty to recall it. I thought it likely that the vicar might be the almoner of many kind-hearted and wealthy families in the neighbourhood, and the people might fear being passed over when they wanted help in the hard seasons that befell them. “ Tell the men,” I said, “ that I am no pedlar of opinions ; I do not hawk my principles about the country ; and if Cromer would rather I should not speak in the town, I had no wish to speak to unwilling ears.”

The stout fishermen probably reflected that they earned their bread in the tempest, by day and by night, holding their lives in their own hands, while the vicar passed his days secure from harm, and that they would get through my lecture as they had through other storms. Hence they answered “ they should light their best candles for Mr. Holyoake, and make their room as bright and cheerful as they could, if he chooses to come.” When nightfall arrived, I marched through the village with my host (whose Quaker blood was a little stirred) to lecture. Not a soul was moving in Cromer. Nearing the rooms, we observed a solitary man emerging from a cottage in the direction of the Lecture Room. His back was made visible by a penny candle in the window. “ There does not appear,” I said to my friend, “ any great stampede to the lecture, but I

shall deliver it to you, and our friend, whose back we have seen, should he arrive there."

On entering the room I was astounded by an immense shout of welcome. The fishermen were there in force. A respectable inhabitant of the place was voted to the chair, and a gracious little speech of introduction was made by the gentleman, Mr. Kemp, whose guest I was.

I delivered my lecture. As I explained the difference between oratory and mere public speaking, and the characteristics of Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli, Lowe, Bernal Osborne, Buxton, Sir Wilfred Lawson, Stansfeld, and others, and pointed out the gradations of that art by which men climb on phrases to power, signs of discernment arose sufficient to satisfy any speaker. A reverend visitor, Mr. Valpy, whose father was a great classic authority, made a neat little speech at the end.

We said not a word about the vicar. I made no allusion to him, direct or indirect. It is a long time since those little peculiarities of the ecclesiastical mind, which he had displayed, affected or concerned me ; and the audience imagined I did not notice what he had done. I doubt not he was a kind-hearted gentleman to whom many have been indebted for words of counsel and acts of humanity. He was, perhaps, a little apt to forget that the people of Cromer were citizens as well as Christians, and had a right to know what affected them as Englishmen—that they needed to understand the secular merits of those great men who influence their destinies and make the English name distinguished on the earth. The Cromer men had no doubt reasons for respecting the vicar in removing the placards which were distasteful to him, and respected themselves by giving a courteous hearing to what a stranger had to say to them.

In any other town in England it is necessary to advertise a lecture two or three days ; but in Cromer it is sufficient to advertise a lecture for three hours, and this may have been the reason why they took the placards out of the windows at mid-day. However, to the inexperienced visitor, it seemed that Church courtesy in Cromer had contracted the qualities of the East wind, and dictation of the Romish type, which many thought obsolete in England, was still in force in that remote corner of East Anglia.

## CHAPTER LXXXIV.

### *STORY OF THE LIMELIGHT ON THE CLOCK TOWER.*

(1868.)

DURING several pleasant years I was secretary to a member of Parliament. His residence being at a considerable distance from the House of Commons, he had no means of knowing when "the House was up." Some days there would be an early "count out." Most members daily leave the House during what is termed "dinner hours" to dine, but it sometimes happened that the House would be counted out in the dinner-time. Then the return journey to the House was needless. A member in constant attendance at committees and Parliament would be glad to absent himself until later in the evening, when a division in which he was interested might be taken. But though the House might adjourn before the usual time; there was no means of discovering this until he drove into sight of Palace Yard.

At that time the limelight was coming into use, and I thought it might be made available to prevent this inconvenience to members. The present Duke of Rutland was then at the Board of Works, and I addressed to him a letter on the subject which remained some years in the archives of the Board of Works, and is probably there now. I have no copy of the letter, but I well remember its purport. It was to this effect:—

"Being secretary of a member of Parliament, I have observed that considerable inconvenience arises by members having no means of knowing when the House is up, at times when they

are unable to foresee it. There are no means by which a member can know it, unless he provides some one to send him a telegram to an address which he would have to renew every night, according to the place where he expected to be after leaving the House sitting. If he dined at one of the great clubs, he would learn when the House was up there, by members coming in who had recently left the House, or from the arrival of the hourly report of the proceedings in Parliament. But he might be dining four or five miles away, and must drive to one of the clubs to get the information. It is true that in Palace Yard gas lights, which have three arms, have only the centre one left burning—to indicate to persons arriving there that the House is up. But any one must drive to the bottom of Parliament Street before the single light can be discerned. It is a probable calculation that many members in the course of a session drive five hundred miles before they can reach Palace Yard to learn that the House is up. Reporters and others who have business with members at the House at night are subject to similar inconvenience. All this might be prevented if a limelight were placed at the summit of the Clock Tower. It could be seen six or seven miles in most directions, and members could learn at will whether the House was sitting or not."

This letter was longer than would seem necessary ; but it was needful to explain in detail the inconvenience to which members were subjected which might be so simply obviated. It was necessary to show that all the existing means of information were taken into account by the writer, for if any one had been omitted the suggestion might be thought based upon insufficient information—the official mind being always quick to show that there is no necessity for doing what it does not want to do.

Lord John Manners, the name by which the Duke of Rutland was then known, acknowledged the receipt of the communication, but without indicating whether it would be considered. Nothing came of it until Mr. Ayrton became Commissioner of the Board of Works. Though he excelled all Ministers in making himself unpleasant in debate, he also excelled in being the most vigilant of servants of the public in Parliament, being tireless in his attendance and reading more Parliamentary papers than any four members. He found my letter in the

pigeon-holes of the Board of Works, and put up the limelight on the Clock Tower, which has made the House of Parliament as it were a beacon light visible all over London during the night sittings. An article upon it in *The Times*, after Mr. Ayrton had ceased to be Commissioner, giving a description of this Tower light, began by the remark that "a former Commissioner of Works found the suggestion in the office." The article was evidently written by a well-informed but reticent writer. It implied that the Commissioner who put up the light did not originate it, but it was not said how the suggestion came into the office, or who sent it there.

## CHAPTER LXXXV.

### *PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE IN BIRMINGHAM*

(1868.)

My second candidature was in Birmingham. It was constantly said that the working class had no reasonable measures to propose which the middle class would not pass. This was not, and is not, true ; for the master class no more feels as the workmen feel than the old aristocratical class before 1830 felt, or as the middle class proved they did, when afterwards they came into power. And if it were true that the middle class would now do all the working men want, it is better that the working men should do it for themselves. For these reasons I sought the opportunity of addressing my own townsmen, to whom I could naturally speak with most freedom, upon the conditions and consequences of working-class representation.

In my address delivered in the Town Hall I said—

“ More than thirty years ago I was a member of your Political Union, and since that time there has been no combination (sometimes called “conspiracy”) in this country to bring general enfranchisement about, which I have not, by speech and pen, advocated without intermission. Now we have a considerable extension of the suffrage, there are things of evil to cancel, and conditions of progress to create.

“ We have, though limited, a ‘political commonwealth’ at last, and one result is that working men will, sooner or later, find their way into Parliament. Venturous of it myself, it is my townsmen whom I address. My ancestors lie here ; I know most of, and naturally care much for, Birmingham. In all my

writings I have looked on public affairs in the light of the workshop. A Democracy is a great trouble. Everybody has to be consulted. The Conservative is enraged to have this necessity put upon him ; the Whigs never meant it to come to this ; and I am not sure that many of the Radicals like it.

“ Several things will happen now. 1. The Irish Church will go. Well I remember the horror with which the news was received in the workshops of this town of the massacre of Rathcormac, when a clergyman of the Irish Protestant Church had the sons of the poor Widow Ryan shot before her eyes for the non-payment of tithes. The middle class mother cannot feel resentment as a poor woman can ; she can afford to pay tithes, and no dragoon shoots her children down. But Widow Ryan’s sons were labourers—they belonged to us. The shriek of the mother reached us. We in England could do nothing to avert or avenge their murder. But let us not have the baseness to forget it. Now that slow, tardy, long-lingered retribution has put the Irish Church in the noose, let *us* hope it will be allowed a good drop.

“ 2. We shall have compulsory education. There is no ascendancy for the people without sense. We live in a world where the battle of life can no longer be fought by fools ; and the child who is turned out into it ignorant is bound, hand and foot, in the conflict. We shall put away with contempt that pitiful, fitful, partial, mendicant instruction with which voluntaryism has cheated and degraded us so long.

“ 3. Pauperism will be put down as the infamy of industry. A million paupers—a vast standing army of mendicants—in the midst of the working class, depending for support upon the middle class, is a reproach to every workman now. Every law which deprives Industry of a fair chance must be attacked ; whatever facilitates the accumulation of immense fortunes and tends to check the natural distribution of property must be stopped.

“ 4. We shall have the ballot. Open voting is merely an insolent device for getting at those electors who do their duty. The poll-book is a penal list, first made publishable by those who intended to act upon it—and it is acted upon by all who are enraged at defeat.”

It does good to create a popular belief that the day of progress has arrived ; that men need no longer despair of improvement, or seek to obtain it by conflict of arms, as they were formerly justified in doing under the hopelessness of obtaining it by reason. In my address I ventured to say that the Irish Church would go ; that we should have compulsory education ; that pauperism would be regarded as the infamy of industry ; that elections would be decided by ballot. I had heard the four things I had spoken of, hoped for, agitated for, and they seemed no nearer, and were believed to be no nearer, than the right of women to sit in Parliament is now. Yet each of these things, then regarded as words of Utopian enthusiasm, have come to pass.

The object of my being a candidate at Birmingham was to test and advocate the question of working-class representation. At that time there was no strong feeling on the part of the working class in favour of the representation of their order. Had I sought I could have obtained a sufficient support from Conservatives to have embarrassed the prospects of Mr. Bright or his colleague, and the Conservatives would have obtained the credit of supporting a principle for which they did not care and would disown when their own end was served. I might have obtained some publicity useful to a candidate by such an alliance, but it never seemed to me to be any more right in politics than in morals to do evil that good may come. For thirty-six years the representation of Birmingham had been in the hands of the middle class, and though the working class were twenty times more numerous than they, it had never occurred to the middle class that the industrious majority were entitled to any personal representation. Certainly they never offered or facilitated it.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

### *A DANGEROUS VISITOR.*

(1868.)

A FEW years ago, London was startled by the discovery of a murder in Whitechapel which recalled the Red Barn murder of Maria Martin, by William Corder, half a century before. A woman was shot in the rear of some business premises in Whitechapel and buried there, and her murderer, one Wainwright, was caught in the streets twelve months later, conveying the body to another hiding-place.

Some time previously a public writer, for whom I had much regard, became unwell. One day a lady came to me at Cockspur Street saying that he was very ill, that she was his wife and needed aid for his succour. She met my offer to visit him by assuring me that he had a malignant fever, and I had better not call. This was to deter me from calling, but I did not suspect it. Soon after she came again in deep mourning, in the character of his widow. She was a handsome, voluptuous woman, with great dramatic talent. Her speech, tears, and gestures were very eloquent, and I promised to ask for subscriptions for her. This entertaining applicant gave me to understand that she had been upon the stage in earlier years, and certainly she showed qualifications for acting which warranted what she said. I knew that my lost friend, who was really dead, had at one time £30,000 in a public company, which yielded 10 to 12 per cent., when he lived opulently in a house in Piccadilly. Afterwards his income fell to zero. In his prosperous days he had given eighty guineas for a jewelled watch, and presented it to Samuel Bailey, of Sheffield, in testimony of appreciation of his philosophical writings.

In the end I fulfilled my promise to the distressed lady in black, and published the substance of the story told to me by her. The eventual result was some £40 or £50. The first and second £5 I remitted to her. The lady paid me a further visit of thanks, and asked me to call upon her and take breakfast at a suburban cottage, at which she resided with a female friend, as it would save my time in writing, and I could bring any further subscription which might be to hand. Not wishing any personal acquaintance, which might raise expectations of aid beyond my means of procuring, I asked my brother Austin to make a call at his convenience, and leave further remittances for her ; and sometimes a clerk in my employ was sent. I never went myself.

It was fortunate I did not. On the apprehension of Wainwright, I saw in the papers accounts that his brother—who was afterwards transported for his complicity in the murder—was supporting a mistress, and was frequently at the very house to which I had been invited. Had I accepted the invitation to breakfast, I might have been found there by the police officers who went to the place in search of the brother. As the murderer was a lecturer at institutes of the kind I had promoted and been present at myself, my intimacy with him would have been inferred. Had my name been mentioned as that of a visitor at Rosamond Cottage when the address with other interesting particulars were published, I should have found it difficult to persuade everybody of the disinterested nature of my visits, especially as I could only have explained that my business there was to take money to a lady who had invited me there. My brother had simply called and left the sums I gave him, and neither of us suspected that she was not the wife of my friend.

Before the Whitechapel affair transpired, the enterprising pretender had written to several public persons on her own account. As it was my practice always to print in the paper I edited all sums for whatever purpose sent, the “widow” could see who were the friends who had answered my appeal, and she wrote to them and others whom she thought had knowledge of her alleged husband, enclosing what I had written upon him on her behalf. She was what the Scots would call an “ingenious body.” All her letters to me bore a deep mourning

border. Several members of Parliament wrote to me to ask whether they were warranted in giving money. In my replies I said I had no knowledge of the new applications made to them, nor was there any public claim on them, though I understood there was need of help. Several cheques were sent to me for her. When I found that I had been misled, I gave notice to all who afterwards wrote to me, and publicly cancelled my appeal and informed the applicant to that effect.

The judge at the trial of Wainwright was Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. The summing-up of some judges is often so learnedly elaborate, involved, dreary, and inartistic, that it is a species of penal infliction on the jury and only merciful to the doomed, upon whom it acts as the drugs given to the Suttee, which stupefies and makes insensible to the fatal fire. Sir John Holker, as Attorney-General, conducted the prosecution. Sir John was a Conservative. It was frequently said there was a good deal in him, but it did not come out on this occasion. Mr. Moody made the speech for the defence, in which he said nothing wrong and nothing strong. There was no glamour of light, or pathos, or ingenuity in any one.

But when Lord Cockburn rose, the hand of the master appeared. The ornateness which he sometimes showed in speeches out of court was chastened down. His sentences were expressed with pure nervous force. Nothing was repeated, no phrase nor even idea recurred. The story of the evidence was clear, direct, vivid, brief, complete, and conclusive. The first sentences of the summing-up against Wainwright had death in them. The jury could see, as in a panorama, the perpetration of a foul murder, the source of the blow, and the ghastly procedure of successive concealments, as plainly as Hamlet displayed the process of the death of his father to his mother and the king. In sleuth-hound sentences the stealthy steps of the brutal, calculating murderer were tracked. Wainwright must have seen the noose in every passage. Lord Cockburn's address to the jury was an unequalled piece of forensic reasoning, so far as any charge of the kind has come within my knowledge. Its coherence was not only evident to the jury—it was never out of sight. It had picturesque terms which had colour in them. The crisp, penetrating voice of Cockburn suited the finished structure of his address. Juries

charged by him were instructed ; the prisoner at the bar, who had taste, was afterwards proud to have been condemned with such classic art, and the sentiment of the Court was raised above the level of crime by the genius of the judge.

## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

### *REPORTING SPEECHES WHICH NEVER WERE MADE.*

A good deal of reporting has fallen to me in my time, chiefly of the descriptive kind. During several years that I had opportunity of hearing nightly the speeches made in Parliament, I found that all the new ideas expressed there could easily be taken down in long hand, since they occurred seldom and were far between. A newspaper, not having space to report everything said, might entertain and much instruct its readers by giving merely the new ideas of the debates, or remarkable ways of presenting a familiar case. Once a Cabinet Minister, who was going into the provinces to make a speech, he wished to see reproduced in London papers, asked me what he should do to secure that what he said should not be open to misinterpretation. I answered that, if he was sure of saying exactly what he intended, he might ask the editor of the leading local paper to send a reporter to take down his speech exactly as he made it. Good stenographers so abound that he would get what he wanted. But were he doubtful of being quoted at full length in the London press, he had better take a summary reporter with him, since a verbatim reporter, by his habit of literalness, would lack the faculty of bringing into focus the genius of a speech. To produce a telling summary the reporter need not be able to make the speech, but he must be able to measure the mind and discern the purpose of the speaker.

When in America in 1879, I found in some parts a class of Reversible Reporters. After an interview I found next day in the paper sentiments put down to me the very reverse of what I had expressed. Once I tried the experiment of saying the

opposite of what I meant, and next day it came out all right. It was not perversity nor incapacity which misrepresented me, it was owing to professional confidence in young reporters that they knew better than any speaker did what he ought to say.

Once a friend of mine, a Jew, who knew this world as well as the Talmud, was the proprietor of a newspaper in a country town, within an hour's ride from London, asked me to come down and give an account of laying the foundation stone of a new town building and report the speeches at the banquet which was to follow at night. Some members of Parliament came down with whose ways of thought I was familiar, and I made summaries of their speeches which I knew they would be willing to circulate among their constituents. If the object is to promote the circulation of the paper, the effective portion of what a speaker says must be brought out, or there will be no orders for copies sent to the office. A reporter may make a clever report of a speech and prefix it with the remark that "the meeting was small." There are no copies of that paper bought by the speaker or his friends for circulation. If the hall is crowded it is well to say so. But no public persons care to circulate information that few care to listen to them. If the object is to discredit a speaker the question is one of policy not circulation.

Now, there was a rival paper in the town to which I went. The proprietor of the paper I represented wished his paper to excel that, which was not difficult, as it was sleepy and un-enterprising. So I wrote a leader upon the speeches at the stone-laying. A speaker who has ability is pleased to see it discerned and handsomely acknowledged. A man who acquits himself well may without vanity be pleased with the credit he has fairly earned ; and he who does not excel in expression may have merit of character and purpose to which it is the interest of the public to accord recognition.

The banquet in the evening was prolonged and boisterous. No reporter was present from the rival paper and I was instructed to report the speeches. On seeing the composition of the guests, I consulted with my Jewish friend, who, like all his race, was shrewd and foreseeing. We examined the toast list and then I inquired the characteristics of the speakers, their manner of mind, peculiarity of expression and antecedents

of family, public service, and other particulars. One old farmer was reputed to represent a generation of predecessors who had held the same land from the Norman Conquest. By the time the toasts began the whole company was more hilarious than coherent. Some never could speak in public, and little was expected from them. A few when they began to speak were unable to stop. Some had forgotten what they intended to say, and others had nothing to forget. Some could speak better before the banquet began than after, and some acquired boldness in consequence of it, and made up by audacity what they lacked in relevance. By eleven o'clock I had sent out speeches for them all, and by midnight their orations were all in type, and the paper was out in the early morning. The town was astonished at the enterprise to which it was unaccustomed. The principal orator had a speech of some brightness to read at his breakfast, of which he was unconscious when he retired to rest. My friend the proprietor of the paper had misgivings when he read the report. He said the town would be surprised that such speeches were made. I answered, "the town was not present. The guests who did not speak were not in a condition to know what was said, and, take my word for it, no speaker will discern what he is reported to have said." And no one did. As a leader upon the proceedings of the day confirmed and illustrated the report by descriptive characteristics of the speakers, which the town knew to be true, my friend received many congratulations on the variety and vivacity of that issue of his *Gazette*. The office was not rich, and for all the writing from midday till midnight my remuneration was but thirty shillings, but I served my friend and increased for that week the reputation of his paper and its commercial value when he transferred it, as it was his intention shortly after to do.

"Reporting speeches which never were made" is a title open to the objection of being incomplete. The speeches were made, but not in the manner which met the public eye. Two or three of the festive orators had sagacity and brightness, though, on that occasion, not of the consecutive kind. Every provincial assembly of speakers furnishes instances of native wit or idiomatic humour. If these points are preserved in the report of the proceedings, an interesting monograph of the

meeting is the result. Every night in Parliament occur notable relevant passages, occasional flashes of common sense, sometimes overlaid with words, and sometimes insufficiently expressed, of which an epitome would be good reading. Every day the Parliamentary reports of speeches presents them in a more effective form than the hearer was sensible of during the delivery. When *The Times* sought to destroy the popularity of Orator Hunt of a former day, it reported his speeches verbatim. There are many speakers in Parliament who would suffer in public estimation if their repetitions and eccentricities of expression were recorded. On one memorable occasion the *Morning Star* reported a passage from a speech of Mr. Disraeli's, with all its bibulous aspirates set forth, which few forgot who read it. It was on the night of his famous financial speech when Lord John Manners carried into the House five glasses of brandy and water to refresh him—which got at last into his articulation. The late Sir John Trelawny told me that he had preserved notes of speeches made after midnight in the House of Commons over a period of twelve years. At late sittings scarcely a reporter remains, and the necessity of going to the press with some account of the proceedings obliges the editor to give but a brief summary in which the speeches are not only divested of flesh and blood, but are almost boneless. Yet things are said at those times which the public would read with amazement both for their instruction and their boldness. Sir John said he did not intend his notes to be published until after his death. It will be a remarkable volume when it appears.

A London daily paper of age and pretension, often describes speeches of note which are never found in the report in its columns. Sometimes it quotes sentences of distinction which nowhere appear in the speech in its pages. Only one paper gives a full Parliamentary report. Once five papers did it. On the great debate when the Taxes on Knowledge was the question before the House, five daily papers gave full reports. So marvellously accurate were they, that there was scarcely a variation of a word in them. I heard all the speeches and compared the reports the next day. Competition in reporting produced a perfection which exists in London no longer.

## CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

### *AN UNTOLD STORY OF THE FLEET STREET HOUSE.*

(1868.)

THIS chapter illustrates the wisdom of the proverb that zeal without experience is as fire without light.

It was an early ambition of mine to have a publishing house in Fleet Street. There Richard Carlile had established the right of heretical opinion to publicity. I was for continuing it there. The Duke of Wellington headed a society to drive Carlile from the street. He did not intimidate him, nor was the society able to remove him except by procuring his further imprisonment. Resentment at this incited me to succeed him. Fleet Street was one of the highways of the world. A million curious people pass through it every year, of every travelling nationality under the sun.

We had won the right to say what we pleased, and the question arose, What did we please to say, and how were we going to say it? In the combat for the right to speak, very picturesque invective had been used. In the use of that weapon our adversaries much excelled us; but, we being the party of the minority, the blame of employing it fell upon us. When we had won the field we could hold it only by fairness of speech, the "outward and visible sign" of just intention and just principles.

William and Robert Chambers had established a secular publishing house in the High Street of Edinburgh. I proposed to my brother Austin that we should do the same thing for Freethought, in Fleet Street, London. The printing business

was to be his—the publishing and its risks mine. The responsibility of capital, trade salaries, rent, and taxes remained with me. My name alone was on every bond.

Mr. James Watson had been, since the days of Julian Hibbert, the publisher of Carlyle's works, taking like peril. As the new house in Fleet Street would necessarily affect his business, which was his only means of subsistence, I asked him what would compensate him for loss of trade thus caused. He said £350, which, with what he had, would provide for him in the future. According to the accepted morality of trade, I was under no obligation to consider his interests. A man sets up in business next door to one in the same line, doing what he can to lure away his neighbour's custom, and it is not counted dishonourable. It seemed baseness to me, and I promised Mr. Watson the money. This proved an unfortunate thing for me. When he came to know the indispensable business expenses of the new house were £300 a year, he did not see how I was to meet them, apart from fulfilling my promise to him, and, being of an apprehensive nature, he could not conceal his misgivings; and as he knew the chief country agents upon whom I depended, his fears transpired in personal communications with them and to my chief friends whom he knew, they having as much regard for him as for me. The effect of this was disastrous on a young business. My solicitor, who had advanced me purchase money of the lease, asked me what I was to have for the money to be paid to Mr. Watson. He thought me imprudent. I had nothing to produce, save the right of selling his books, which never yielded £50. Nevertheless I kept my promise. My brother Austin was as solicitous as I was to do it. Seeing Mr. Watson on the opposite side of the street, looking in his wistful way at the house, I sent my brother with the only £60 in hand to go over and pay him the final instalment, which he did. The transaction was in every way unfortunate to me, but I never regretted it. Nor do I now. The curious thing was that no one respected me for it, or believed it, and no one ever made any acknowledgment of it, not even Mr. Watson. Mr. W. J. Linton in his "Life of Watson" omits it, although it made the end of Watson's days pleasant. It was treated as incredible, and for the first time I came to understand the sagacious maxim of the Italians,

"Beware of being too good." I had known few persons in danger of transgressing the rule, and did not suspect I was one.

A valued colleague, Charles Southwell, took a very different view from Mr. Watson as to the profits obtainable in Fleet Street, and thought I was making riches there, as many others thought, so what was loss to me was envy to others. Southwell published pamphlets on my prosperity. One day I sent for him, showed him the bonds I had signed, and that I owed all the money he thought had been given me. His exclamation was a full acquittal—"Jacob, you are a damned fool!" I asked him to publish it. "No, I won't own I was wrong; but I will no more say what I have said," was all I could get. The financial part of the story may end here. The £250 given me after the Cowper Street debate, £650 given me subsequently, a gift of £250 and all I could earn by lectures and writing—over the needs of my household—were all lost.

Propagandism is not, as some suppose, a "trade," because nobody will follow a "trade" at which you may work with the industry of a slave and die with the reputation of a mendicant. The motives of any persons to pursue such a profession must be different from those of trade, deeper than pride, and stronger than interest.

Afterwards there came mischief of another kind, which I had bespoken without knowing it. As a co-operator I was an advocate for profit-sharing, and I made this arrangement with those I employed. As the law then stood, this made them my partners, and gave them an equal claim with me to the property. One who had some knowledge of law, and was hostile to me, incited two servants to act on their "rights." They might have carted the stock away, and could only be prevented by force, which I had reason to avoid. An assault case would then have come on at the Mansion House which would have had an effect bad for the secular cause. The addresses of my friends were copied from my books, and letters sent to them, which cost me for many years many valued friendships, for reasons I could not answer—not knowing them. The manager of the newsagents' department was instructed that he might take away the business books, and did it. It was two years before I could recover them by process of law. Then I had

to keep outside the court because, were I called upon to give evidence, I could not take the oath, and that fact would have set the court against me. The judge said that had I come into court he would have given the man twelve months' imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> This affair put me to £200 expense—besides losses through having no proof to adduce of the balances of news-agents due to me. Had the law which, later, Mr. Wm. Scholefield, M.P. for Birmingham, caused to be passed, been in force then, I should not have been at the mercy of enemies. Now-a-days, an employer giving profits to servants does not constitute them partners.

Just then, when my fortunes were least to my mind, Mr. Ross, at that time an optician of repute, learning that I was being unfairly used, came down and gave me a cheque for £250. That was a bright, unparalleled morning which I shall never forget until remembrance of all things fades.

Despite all difficulties, "147, Fleet Street" was kept in force from 1853 to 1861. Its objects were—

1. Promoting the solution of public questions, on secular grounds, apart from theology.
2. Obtaining equal civil rights for all excluded from them by conscientious opinion not recognised by the State.
3. Maintaining a publishing organisation which should influence public affairs.
4. Maintaining a centre of personal communication open to publicists at home and from abroad.
5. Stimulating the free search for truth, without which it is unattainable—the free utterance of the result, without which search is useless—the free criticism of it, without which truth must remain uncertain—the fair action of conviction, without which public improvement is impossible.
6. Maintaining an organ which should be open to all writers, without regard to coincidence of opinion, provided there was general relevance and freedom from odious personalities.

The shop was made bright, and, by removal of partitions, spacious. All new books of progress were on sale, and

<sup>1</sup> He was a Wesleyan and of good integrity, until seduced by prospect held out to him of setting up himself with my business.

advertised in papers of the house without cost to the authors. A large room was fitted up for meetings and for the use of visitors. In each panel hung a portrait of some eminent writer. Visitors from every part of the world interested in New Thought came and found information respecting all lecture halls and places they wished to see. We published a catalogue of all the chief works of advanced thinkers (giving the prices and the names of the publishers to promote their sales), by whomsoever issued. No other house ever printed a catalogue like it. The house was an Institute. There have been other houses in Fleet Street since with similar objects, but none like it—none having the same features. The main object was the advancement of new opinion : business was an appendage to be well attended to ; but it stood in the second place.

When the peace of 1856 was proclaimed—though the great nations of the Continent were left still enslaved—we illuminated in front of the house those nobly reproachful words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, which said :—

“ It is no peace.  
Annihilated Poland, stifled Rome,  
Dazed Naples, Hungary fainting 'neath the throng,  
And Austria wearing a smooth olive leaf  
On her brute forehead, while her troops outpress  
The life from Italy.”

These words were read by a quarter of a million of people. Every newspaper in London agreed that this was the sole illumination which expressed the political truth of the hour. These things could never have been done save in a house standing in one of the highways of the world, where those must pass whose eyes it was worth while engaging, and where nothing can well be ignored which was done. On other public occasions Garibaldian and Italian flags greeted memorable processions.

In 1857 there was the Day of Humiliation proclaimed on account of the Indian Mutiny. Instead of joining in it, a placard appeared in our windows which attracted crowds of readers. It was entitled, “ Objections to the Humiliation.”

“ I. It is an ineffective proceeding, seeing that temporal deliverance is not to be obtained by intercession of Heaven.

2. It is offensive, as imputing to the judicial act of God the blunders of the East India Company.

3. It is impolitic, if we have enemies in India, to give them the satisfaction of thinking that they have brought Great Britain to confess 'humiliation.'

Without a publishing house we could not have rendered the service in the Repeal of the Taxes upon Knowledge mentioned in a previous chapter. In the affair of the opposition to the Conspiracy Bill, the committee met in the Fleet Street house, as did the Garibaldi Committee at the time when the British Legion were sent out to Italy. Then, for several days, a committee of soldiers sat in the visitors' room, and the shop was constantly crowded with Garibaldians who volunteered to join the Legion. My brother was as much occupied as I was. This was international service, but it was not business.

We published works for Mazzini, Robert Owen, Kossuth, Louis Blanc, Professor Newman, Dr. Arnold Rouge, January Searle, Major Evans Bell, William Macall, W. J. Birch, and many others.

I had a bust of Kossuth made by a Hungarian sculptor, and one of Mazzini by Bazzi. The original of Mazzini was purchased by Mr. Ashurst. The mould, which cost me £7, was never returned to me by the bust maker. It was said it had been broken. A few years later I saw several busts in a window cast in my mould, which I judge still exists.

We printed and published also the "Manifesto of the Republican Party," by Kossuth, Ledru Rollin, and Mazzini. Though written by Mazzini, he modestly, as was his wont, put his name last. All the publications I issued bore my imprint as printer as well as publisher, for the law makes the printer responsible. Were there no printing of books, there could be no publishing of books. The publisher may be a nominal person, of residential address unknown; but the printer is real, and commonly has a plant of type which may be confiscated, while he himself can readily be found and incarcerated. The law aims mostly to intimidate the printer. I, therefore, took the responsibility of the printer as well as publisher.

Julian Hibbert gave Carlile £1,000 with which to furnish his shop when he opened it, and he had like sums from him on

other occasions for publishing purposes. Notwithstanding the vicissitudes which befell us, we should have succeeded in a "business point of view" had we had money sufficient to continue when hostilities were surmounted. As it was, we did enough to justify the expectation of usefulness which induced so many to support the undertaking.

When we opened this house the voice of the Socialist was silent in the land and the watch-fires of the Chartist were extinct. As far as we were able, we intended to maintain the claim of Socialists and Chartists and some other causes for which they cared not. We cared for political freedom at home and abroad, for unless it prevails abroad it can never be secure at home. There is an aristocracy of sex quite as offensive as an aristocracy of peers. Manhood suffrage was popular with the Chartists, but they cared nothing for women's enfranchisement.

In a passage which I quote from a manifesto of Kossuth, Rollin, and Mazzini, which did but express our ambition :—

"A great movement must have an arm to raise the flag, a voice to cry aloud—*The hour has come!* We are that arm and that voice. . . . Advanced Guard of the Revolution, we shall disappear amid the ranks on the day of the awakening of the peoples. . . . We are not the future; we are its precursors. We are not the democracy; we are an army bound to clear the way for democracy."

It was my intention to "disappear in the ranks." As soon as I had extinguished all the liabilities I had incurred, I volunteered to hand over the place to the promoters. I thought if others had the profit which might accrue they would continue the work without direction. This was my mistake. To me it was of no consequence who had the advantage if the house was maintained. But nobody believed this.

Freethought is of the nature of intellectual Republicanism. All are equal who think, and the only distinction is in the capacity of thinking. I never set up as a chief. I never talked of loyalty to me, but of loyalty to principle alone. In freethought there is no leadership save the leadership of ideas. I went into this undertaking with this conviction, and as I went in I came out.

## CHAPTER LXXXIX.

### *LORD CLARENDON'S CONCESSION*

(1869-72.)

THIS chapter describes another instance of work which, my being of the Secularistic persuasion, I was incited to attempt. In my Christian days I had been taught that the safety of my own soul was the supreme object I should keep before me ; but experience showed me that the human welfare of others was a more honourable solicitude, and more profitable to them.

It has been the custom of the Government, since 1858, to instruct her Majesty's Secretaries of Embassy and Legation to prepare "Reports on the State of Manufactures and Commerce Abroad." It seemed to me that the same persons might collect information of not less importance to working men. At times, during several years, I made attempts to get this done. Through Mr. Milner Gibson, I obtained a copy of the original circular of instruction for the preparation of the manufacturers' reports on commerce, as I intended to base on them a plea for reports on labour.

At length, in April, 1869, Lord Clarendon being Foreign Minister, whose generous sympathy with those who live by industry was known, I concluded he might, on due representation, make this concession. It was then I wrote to Mr. Bright, whose attention was always given to proposals which could be shown to be reasonable, useful, and practical ; for that which is reasonable may not be useful, and that which is useful may not be practical, while a project which is at once relevant, beneficial, and possible, is self-commended. Seeing me next midnight at the House of Commons, he called me to him, saying, "Tell me now what you want." On hearing it, he answered,

"Write me a letter with your reasons in it, and I will give it to Lord Clarendon." By the courtesy of Mr. William White, chief doorkeeper of the House, I wrote in his room the letter the same night, and posted it in the Lobby before two o'clock. The next day (April 19, 1869), Mr. H. G. Calcraft (Mr. Bright's secretary, he being then a Minister) wrote to say, "Mr. Bright would ask Lord Clarendon to take into consideration my suggestions." On April 21st following, Mr. Calcraft again wrote, "by Mr. Bright's request, to say that Lord Clarendon thought my proposal an admirable one, and that he had given instructions that the information may be obtained from the several Legations." My letter upon which Lord Clarendon acted set forth that workmen needed information of the condition of labour markets abroad as much as their employers. Strikes against reduction of wages take place, which reduction is often owing to competition abroad, but is not believed, owing to the knowledge upon which the employer acts being unknown to the men. Authentic information accessible to trade unionists would be instructive and useful. Emigration is promoted by Government. Some who go out suffer great disappointment from want of knowledge of the right places to which to go. This becoming known, many are deterred from emigrating, and thus miss good opportunities of advantage through ignorance of where the right labour markets in other countries lie. In Turkey 6,000 stone-masons were suddenly wanted for one of the Sultan's new palaces, while masons were emigrating to countries where stones were not used in buildings. I enumerated certain kinds of information secretaries of Embassy and Legation could furnish from the countries in which they were stationed.

Questions to which I asked answers were :—

1. What was the state of the labour market? What openings were there, if any? And what kind of workmen were wanted?
2. How would English workmen be hired and housed? What kind of dwellings would they find? What wages would they be offered? What rent would they have to pay? In what quarters would they have to dwell, in healthy or unhealthy places? Would they find tenements available—ventilated, drained, and free from air poisoning?

3. What was the purchasing power of money in other countries? All prices should be reduced to English values. A workman at home earning £2 a week, on hearing he could earn £6 a week abroad, would resolve to go out; whereas the cost of food, clothing, and rent might be thrice as high as in England, and his £6 in a new country might go no farther than £2 at home.

4. What is the dietary and habits to which an Englishman must conform in another country, as respects health-preserving power. Should a workman live in some places abroad as he lived in England, he would be dead in twelve months. Workmen who have overcome every industrial disadvantage and have raised themselves to competence abroad, yet rush down the inclined plane of excess, the bottom of which is social perdition. A report which afterwards came from Egypt said—“Spirits must be avoided. Temperate workmen keep their health well. The intemperate die.” The report from Réunion said, “Rum is rank poison to the European. None who contract the habit of drinking it can remain in this country and live.” These are torpedo sentences which arrest the attention of the unthinking transgressor. In the mining districts of Alabama night air is deadly.

5. School questions need also to be asked. If an emigrant took out a family, what education could he get for his children?

6. What is the standard of skill among native artizans with whom the Englishman would have to compete? Do they put their character into their work, or are they without artizan pride? Would they make a stand against doing bad work as they would against bad wages? In what degree would good quality in work have effect in raising wages? A workman might deteriorate among new comrades if they were shabby, bungling, careless workmen.

All these questions were not contained in my first letter. They were increased by permission of Lord Clarendon, as mentioned hereafter. The additions incorporated were three—(a) those relating to health-preserving power abroad, (b) to means of education of children, (c) to the quality of artizan skill.

A few days after these suggestions were made (April 26), Sir Arthur (then Mr.) Otway informed me that “he was to state

that Lord Clarendon, who fully shared my views as to the interest and importance of such information, had received my suggestions with much pleasure, and that it was his lordship's intention to instruct her Majesty's Secretaries of Legation to furnish reports on this subject, which Lord Clarendon proposed eventually to present to Parliament in a collective form, which he hoped might meet the objects indicated in my letter." When the first volume of these "Reports upon the Condition of the Working Classes Abroad" appeared, they received from the *New York Tribune* the name of the "People's Blue Book," given, I believe, by Mr. G. W. Smalley. The volume was found to be of unexpected interest, and abounding in curious information. Some Secretaries of Embassy excelled in brightness, variety, and relevance. As each volume appeared, I wrote a letter in *The Times* describing it. On April 13, 1870, and on September 26, 1871, leaders in *The Times* were written, illustrating the value of the reports, concurring also in my representations of their usefulness. Lord Clarendon was pleased to express the satisfaction with which he read my first letter to *The Times*. His death unfortunately occurred soon after.

In Lord Clarendon's instruction to the Secretaries of Legation, I observed that he had changed my phrase "purchasing power of money" into "the purchase power of money." "Purchasing power" was a phrase new to the Foreign Office, nor was I aware that it had been used in this financial sense before I employed it. It seemed a fair form of the participle. The term afterwards came into general use, and is quite common now.

Occasionally a consul of an inquiring mind, who happened to be in England when the instructions were first issued, had doubts as to their purport. Lord Clarendon sent him to me, at Cockspur Street, where I then had chambers, and I had the honour of explaining the nature of the information sought.

In due course, Mr. Robert Coningsby, a young working engineer, known at that period as the author of letters on social questions having a Tory tinge, wrote to *The Times*, saying, "It was all very well for Mr. Holyoake to connect his name with these Blue Books. The Society of Arts is entitled to the credit of bringing the subject before the Government, and the credit of bringing the subject to the notice of that

society belonged to him." The Society of Arts did not corroborate Mr. Coningsby, nor did he know how early had been my efforts in this matter. Nor did he pretend that he conceived or defined the scope of the questions, or method of obtaining the information required. The Foreign Office frankly accorded me permission to cite the communication received from them. I therefore explained in *The Times* that Lord Clarendon sent me the minute he had forwarded to the Embassies beginning with the words—"Mr. Holyoake has made a valuable suggestion as to the steps to be taken to ascertain the facts as regards the position of the artizan and industrial classes in foreign States." This minute was also sent to me for my consideration with the intimation "that Lord Clarendon would be happy to consider any suggestions I might have to offer, as to any other matters connected with foreign countries in which the industrial classes in this country take an interest, on which the Secretaries of her Majesty's Legations might be instructed to report." This I did, as the reader has seen, in the enumeration already given of questions to be answered. Sir Arthur Otway, with the spontaneous courtesy usual with him, wrote to me, saying that "these reports which were found so useful and interesting were mainly due to my suggestions, and that the late Lord Clarendon, as also the late Mr. Spring Rice, spoke to him more than once of my services in this matter in terms which would be very gratifying to me." After these facts appeared in *The Times*, Mr. Coningsby made no more claim of being the originator of these People's Blue Books. Three volumes of reports, of nearly 1,000 pages, were issued. Had the trades unions subscribed £20,000 and sent out commissioners, they could not in five years have collected and published the same amount of accurate, verified, and trustworthy information contained in these volumes thus supplied without cost to them by the Foreign Office. It was believed that these reports would be furnished at intervals of five or ten years. Twenty have elapsed since the last was issued. Changes in artizans' condition, interests, and aims have occurred since then, and new reports would now have new uses and new influence. Before the People's Blue Books appeared, the information necessary for industrial advancement abroad depended mainly on chance and charity, and as Madame de

Staël said of M. de Calonne, whether he meant mischief or service, "he did not do it with ability"—for want of knowledge.

Men learn patience if not contentment by a comparison of their condition with that of others, which may be no better or worse than their own. They may be encouraged by examples of success attained under discouraging circumstances. A workman can appreciate industrial causes in operation apart from himself, which he fails to discern or estimate through familiarity and prejudice, while he is in contact with his own condition. Principles true in our own streets are discerned more vividly when their operations are traced in the destiny of strange and distant communities. Artizans gain expansion of knowledge, like that which travel gives, when they are brought into the presence of international facts, and are inclined to respect a Government which, instead of lecturing them or coercing them, gathers the experience of nations into a page, and bids them read it for themselves.

## CHAPTER XC.

### *ASSASSINATION BY A JOURNALIST.*

(1870.)

ABOUT the time of the sixth volume of the *Reasoner* (that is not an accepted calender of events, though it enables me to fix the date of many) two young Irishmen came to London seeking their fortune in literature, and to them I was able to be of some service. Both made acknowledgments of it in after years, which I did not often experience in other instances. One of them, Mr. Gerald Supple, came from Dublin ; for him I had regard because, out of his slender earnings, he always sent a portion for the support of his mother and two sisters. He had seen patriotic service in 1848, having been concerned in an insurrection planned in Meath. He wrote for me in the *Reasoner* on secular subjects. Afterwards he wrote in the *Empire* and *Morning Star*, to which I introduced him. At length he went to Australia, studied law, and became a barrister. As is the case with the best Irishmen, his sympathies were with liberty and freedom everywhere, and he never forgot the claims of his country. He had many friends at the bar, and no one who knew him could fail to be impressed by the generous qualities in his character. In 1848, he had been a contributor to the *Nation*, then at its best, and several national ballads written by him are to be found in Hayes's collection, to which good judges assigned great merit. Mr. Ebenezer Syme said in the *Argus* that Mr. Supple "always wrote with extreme moderation and good taste, never permitting his private predilections or animosities to influence his public writings. On several subjects outside the newspaper sphere, he had a fulness of know-

ledge, and wrote upon them with a judgment that was admirable. He wrote on Irish genealogies and antiquities in a manner no other Australian journalist could approach."

In 1870 news came that he was under sentence of death in Melbourne. Newspaper controversialists, as is common in new colonies, are addicted to primitive forms of invective. Melbourne resembled then the amenities of journalism which prevailed in Canada, a much older settlement, until Mr. Goldwin Smith infused refinement in it ; and my friend in Melbourne believed that no reformation in certain quarters there was possible except by the pistol. He therefore resolved to shoot an imputative adversary, one George Paton Smith, at sight—and did it, the shot taking effect in his arm. Mr. John Walshe, a retired police officer, hearing shooting about, with the instinct of his profession, rushed forward to defend the man assailed. Mr. Supple, being near-sighted, mistook the ex-officer for his enemy, shot and killed him. It was his near-sightedness which caused him to entertain unfounded resentment against many persons whom he thought showed him public disrespect by passing him without notice, who had no unfriendly intentions towards him ; he was simply unable to observe their recognition. His brother barristers considered that he had suffered in his professional career by loss of briefs through his infirmity of sight; and he had become moody and unhinged in mind. They therefore set up a plea of insanity to save him. This Mr. Supple repudiated in court, stating that he knew perfectly well what he was doing, and that he intended to kill Mr. Smith, but did not intend to kill Mr. Walshe.

Many persons who commit brutal outrages, or even commit murder in a brutal manner, when it comes to their turn to suffer, squeal and whine to be saved from that which they have inflicted upon others. It was not so with Mr. Supple. In his speech to the Court, before sentence was pronounced, he declared " his purpose was to teach certain persons in Melbourne a lesson in manners. He well knew the consequences of what he had undertaken, and did not object to be hanged." Mr. Supple continued :—" Some years ago I quarrelled with G. P. Smith because of his scurrilous abuse of the people of my country, written by his pen and published in the newspaper he edited. I was the only Irishman on that paper, and I resented

it. He who will not stand up for his country is a paltry person. From that time Mr. Smith slandered me. In this colony there is no check on slander. An action for libel does not arrest it. The duel does not exist here. If any man sent a challenge he would be handed over to the police, and his challenge treated as a farce, as a piece of swagger or bravado. In England public opinion acts as a check on slander. There is nothing of the sort here. I have done this colony good service in reviving something of old-fashioned honour, in the middle of this coarse and wholly material civilization—this mean and sordid thing, in which little seems to be valued higher than the dinner or the bank account. The time will come, and my act will hasten it, when the community will cease to tolerate the assassin of character. As for me, I hope to give my life very cheerfully in this cause. Hanging cannot disgrace me. The gallows cannot disgrace me—I shall confer honour upon it. I shall be glad to get away from this colony, and I can leave it no other way than by the gate of death."

This manly speech could not but inspire respect for the prisoner, however much one must feel that society would be impossible if everybody should resent slander in the deadly way he had adopted. Mr. Supple was sentenced to death. But his counsel appealed against it, on the ground that it was not justifiable to hang a man for an act he never intended to commit. A plea good in morals, but not in law. Mr. E. J. Williams, who was in the Gallery of the House of Commons, and who knew of my early friendship for Mr. Supple, having intimation of the appeal, asked me to aid in saving him from execution. To this end I made the following affidavit, which Sir Wilfrid Lawson did me the favour of attesting for me :—

"I, George Jacob Holyoake, of 20, Cockspur Street, London, County of Middlesex, do truly and solemnly make declaration that I knew well Mr. Gerald H. Supple, now imprisoned, as I am informed, in Melbourne, Australia, on charge of murder. When he was in England he was employed by me in journalistic work : I assisted in procuring him engagements. I had and still have great respect for him as an honourable man ; but I observed a moodiness in his manner, varying from impulsive generosity of speech to inexplicable reticence. His shortness of

sight was greatly against him. He seemed a despairing man at times, and I used to consider him a person whom some great calamity would one day overtake. From the difficulty his manner put in the way of his friends serving, or indeed being sure when they were serving him, I feared great suffering would befall him. Though very intimate with me, and as I believed having personal regard for me, he went away without saying such was his intention, and never communicated with me at the time;<sup>1</sup> nor mentioned me in writing to friends of mine who had served him at my instigation. I doubt not he had acquired some distrust of me, utterly without reason. No doubt he was liable to dangerous delusions.

“GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

“Signed in the presence of WILFRID LAWSON, Justice of the Peace for the County of Cumberland.”

Having rendered political service to Lord Enfield in his Middlesex candidature, I asked him if he could do me the favour of enclosing my affidavit in the Foreign Office bag, he being then in that department. The transmission would then be surer and probably swifter. Lord Kimberley, who became aware of my request, directed (Aug. 4, 1870) me to be informed (which I was by Mr. J. Rogers) that my “affidavit would be forwarded by the next mail to the Governor of Victoria.” But Lord Kimberley did much more than this, as I afterwards learned. Seeing that a man's life was at stake, his lordship, from motives of humanity and kindness, directed that the substance of my affidavit be telegraphed to the Governor of Ceylon with instructions to transmit it to Lord Canterbury at Victoria. By good fortune, which ought always to attend on so generous an act, the telegram was received in Melbourne on the very day before the appeal, and, being delivered by the Foreign Office messenger, it was a welcome surprise to Mr. Supple's counsel, and gave the Court the impression that the Government at home were desirous that the prisoner should have the advantage of whatever evidence existed on his behalf. The result was that, instead of the sentence of death being con-

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards he did, and I was of service to him by sending him letters of introduction.

firmed, Mr. Supple was granted a new trial on the ground of his mental condition.

Four months later a letter arrived from Lord Canterbury upon the subject. Lord Kimberley, still remembering my interest in the fate of my friend, desired Mr. H. T. Holland to transmit to me a copy of the following despatch from the Governor of Victoria :—

“ LORD CANTERBURY TO THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

“ GOVERNMENT OFFICES, MELBOURNE,

Sept. 7, 1870.

“ MY LORD,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your lordship's telegram forwarded to me through the Governor of Ceylon, relative to the mental state of health of G. H. Supple (now under sentence of death), and stating that a despatch and affidavit would be forwarded by the next mail.

“ I lost no time in forwarding this telegram to the Law Officers of the Crown. I may mention that a point of law was reserved at Supple's trial which comes on for argument before the full court to-morrow.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

“ CANTERBURY.”

It is clear from this despatch that but for Lord Kimberley's calculating promptitude my affidavit had been all too late.

The next communication I received was dated Melbourne Gaol, October 4, 1870, from the prisoner, saying :—

“ MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,—How can I thank you for your friendship and kindness in stepping in so promptly to my help ! That telegram must have been an expensive one—I understand from £15 to £18. My friends only ascertained from the Government the day before the last English mail left that it is you who thus came forward for me.

“ I have been thirteen years in this country now. Ebenezer Syme was my very good friend, thanks to the favourable things you said of me in your letter of introduction to him.

“ I calculated upon getting into trouble for what I did, but I cheerfully accept the consequence as a smaller evil than endurance. The medical commission found I was no lunatic. I was to be hanged last month, when, two days before the morning

fixed, leading members of the bar picked flaws in the legal proceedings, the public was stirred with interest, and the Government granted a reprieve and an appeal to the Privy Council. I was notified of a new trial—the same case under another aspect. My legal friends insisted on the plea of insanity. I would have no more of it, and defended myself. The jury were half for acquittal and half for conviction. I may not be hanged for some time yet.

"I often think of those days in London in '50 and '51, and again in '56, when you and Mrs. Holyoake made me feel as if I were at home.—Ever yours sincerely and gratefully,

"GERALD H. SUPPLE."

In the end he was sentenced to imprisonment during her Majesty's pleasure. A year later (Aug. 11, 1871), he wrote again from his gaol, saying :—

"I am unable to express what I feel, and how grateful I am, for what you have done for me, so kindly and ably in such various ways, at a time "when a friend is twice a friend." Your articles in the press, your telegram, and Lord Kimberley's kind interference, thanks to you, have each and all had a great effect in my favour on public opinion here. Your article in the *Reasoner*, which I saw (as well as that in the *Birmingham Post*, which you enclosed to me), was put into one of the papers here, the *Herald*, and has done me much service. The public in Australia are much influenced in all social matters by opinion at home, and your word goes a long way here as well as in England, even among people who may differ from you in politics and theology. After the appearance of that article I had an unusual number of visiting strangers, including three or four members of the Legislature, cordially promising me their good offices at opportunity."

How difficult Mr. Supple was to serve was shown by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy. When he was in office at Melbourne, Supple, at that time a law student and journalist, asked him for permanent Government employment. Several months afterwards, he offered him a post with a salary of £400, which had been previously held by another journalist, one of Supple's

friends. Supple had a short time previously been called to the bar. He indignantly resented the offer, which made Sir Gavan think his mind was affected. He was a singular being, but his courage, disinterestedness, and noble scruples, were honourable singularities. He had done that for which, as a lawyer, he knew he deserved hanging, and felt bound in honour as a gentleman not to shrink from nor evade the penalty. Eight years' imprisonment in Melbourne Gaol elicited from him no murmur. He wrote articles with his dim eyes, and continued his support of sisters who needed aid. Mr. Eaton, of the Treasury Department in Melbourne, was a valued friend of Supple's. On his visit to England we consulted how Supple's imprisonment might one day be changed into banishment, and ultimately the Government considerately permitted him to reside in New Zealand, where he followed pursuits of literature to the advantage of himself and his connections, and he had ever a grateful word for whoever had served him.

## CHAPTER XCI.

### *THE STORY OF THE BALLOT.*

(1868-71.)

HAVING been foremost, or at least publicly persistent, in maintaining that the secular duties of this life had precedence in time and importance over ecclesiastical considerations, it became incumbent on me to follow my own precepts, and, as far as in my power lay, to improve the opportunities of daily life. Being a member of the Council of the London Reform League in 1868, I undertook to vindicate the claim for the Ballot by a "New Defence" of it, of which 10,000 were circulated. Mr. Henry F. Berkeley, M. P., who succeeded Mr. George Grote as the advocate of the Ballot in Parliament, wrote a letter to the press asking attention to my "Defence." He had previously written to me, saying "a greater than I has arisen"—not meaning that I was great and he less than before, but merely that the argument for the Ballot was not exhausted, as the House of Commons supposed, and that I, a young man, might continue an advocacy which the nearness of death to him would soon compel him to abandon. Mr. Bright also was of opinion that the reasons for the Ballot had all been gathered in, and he wrote to me, saying "yours is the only original argument I have seen," which implied no more than that all advocacy of it had proceeded from the points of view of the party politician and the electioneering agent. No one had treated it from the point of view of the working-class voter, which constituted the distinction, whatever it amounted to, of my argument.

Mr. John Stuart Mill, notwithstanding the long champion-

ship of the Ballot by his friend Mr. Grote, declared that "it ought to form no part of a measure for reforming the representation of the people. He thought it unmanly that men should not resent intimidation and defy it. It did not occur to him that it was unmanly on the part of Liberal politicians to allow the means of intimidation to exist. Like Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mill was for individuality and self-help—not thinking that self-help has its limits. To help yourself as much as you can, and as far as you can, is a condition every man must fulfil before he has a claim for the aid of others where his own strength is insufficient. There is no sense in telling a man whose legs are broken he ought to walk unassisted. Under open voting none who depend upon others for employment can be independent without ruin, and it is not practical politics to expect from the people impracticable virtue. Liberals in my time were overwhelmed with the prestige of mad manliness, and used to apologise for the Ballot by saying they "wished the people were strong enough to do without it." Whereas the Ballot was no crutch: it was protection. It was a device which destroyed intimidation by rendering it impossible. Mr. Mill, who, like Jeremy Bentham, was a master of what an American would call "ironclad" phrases, said that the Ballot meant "secret suffrage"—that was the merit of it. Secret suffrage is free suffrage—it means an impenetrable, an impassable, a defiant suffrage; since intimidation could not touch it in the case of those who could trust to the secrecy of the ballot box. There is a base secrecy which men employ in mean, furtive, or criminal acts, but there is a manly secrecy when a man locks his door against impertinent and intrusive people meddling with his affairs without consent. Privacy in what concerns a man vitally—concerns him alone—is manly and justifiable. My argument was that of the following paragraph:—

The old doctrine was that voting was a duty the elector owed to his country. Then it was the duty of the country to take care that he did discharge it. Voting, therefore, should be made compulsory, and intimidation impossible in the discharge of a public duty. The voter is a known person: he is selected by the State—his qualifications are approved: he has recognised interests at stake. He has assigned to him a duty to his

country and to his conscience. It is only by a secret suffrage that he can without "let or hindrance" discharge it. I am said to be an "independent" elector, I am told it is my duty to be independent. Then why should any one want to know the facts of my vote? It is no affair of my neighbour *how* I vote, or for *whom* I vote, or *why* I vote, since I exercise no power nor use any freedom which he does not equally possess. I am not called upon to consult my neighbour as to what I shall do. If I am obliged to consult him, *he is my master*. But he has no business with a knowledge of my affairs; and if he wants it, he is impertinent—if he insists upon it, he is offensive, and means me mischief if I decline to do his bidding. The theory of Representative Government calls upon me to delegate my power to another for a given time. Once in seven years I am master of the situation; afterwards I am at the mercy of the member of Parliament I elect. He may tax me, he may compel the country into unjust and costly wars; he may be a party to base treaties; he may limit my liberty; he may degrade me as an Englishman, but I am bound by his acts. From election to election, he is my master. I must obey the laws he helps to make, or he will suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and put a sword to my throat, or fire upon me with the latest improved rifle he has made me pay for in the estimates. I may howl, but I cannot alter anything. My only security is that a time will come when I shall be master again without fear from my neighbour, or customer, or employer, or creditor, or banker, or landlord, or priest. I shall taste of power for one supreme minute when I shall stand by the ballot box. Then I can vote to displace the member who has betrayed me, and choose another representative in his stead. Representative Government confers upon the English citizen *one minute of liberty every seven years*. It is not much to ask. It is little to be content with. It is a wondrous proof of the people's docility that they yield obedience on such terms. The State ought to keep faith with the elector one minute in every three millions of minutes which elapse on the average between one General Election and another.

The enemies of the Ballot thought fit to oppose this slender concession. Sydney Smith derided it. Lord Palmerston held that it was un-English. According to this reasoning, the use

of armour-plates is cowardly, and it is un-English for a gunner to fire from a casemate. It is madness, not manliness, in a man who opposes his single head to twenty swords. His foolhardiness will merely deter others, and the reputation for courage he will acquire will not outlive the coroner's inquest upon him. There might be more individuality of character than there is if every man rejected the enervating equality of the law, which protects the weak against the strong. Then even the coward must fight and the weak must struggle or perish. But it is insanity of individuality which wantonly enters upon unequal conflicts ; and open voting is of that nature. Secret suffrage is the needle-gun which places the proletariat and the proprietor upon an equality in the electoral combat.

Whittier understood this when he wrote :

“ We have a weapon firmer set,  
And better than the bayonet ;  
A weapon that comes down as still  
As snowflakes fall upon the sod,  
Yet executes a freeman's will,  
As lightning does the will of God,  
And from its force no bolts or locks  
Can shield you—'tis the ballot-box.”

Much more to the same end was in “The New Defence of the Ballot,” which it was said at the time did something in determining the minds of many members of Parliament when they came to vote for the bill who had never looked upon the Ballot from the working class point of view.

After being before the House of Commons for forty years, the Ballot Bill went up to the Lords—a body of gentlemen endowed with legal power to maim or stifle any live measure of progress which they may deem premature. To allay the fear of change which constitutionally agitates them, I said, wherever I had the opportunity of being heard, that the first effect of the Ballot would be to give us a Tory Government for ten years. I wrote to *The Times*, *Daily News*, and *Echo*, urging—

“ The two great fears of the Ballot are these. One is that electors will vote so differently under it as to disturb the balance of parties in many boroughs. The other and greater fear is that such numbers will vote under the Ballot who never

voted before, that nobody will know what will happen anywhere. For three centuries the political vote in England has been a trust, under the condition that the elector used it under the cognizance and in accordance with the views of *somebody else*. Tory and Whig, employer and squire, Radical and Quaker, have all done their best to enforce this doctrine of trust. Relieve the electors of this hereditary pressure, and after allowing for much that habit will do, and less for the action of intelligence, we come down to what the late Lord Derby needlessly dreaded—the dark, unknown land of ignorance, prejudice, passion, of honest but blind hope. The Liberals do not quite like that risk, the Conservatives shudder at any change, and the Radicals think of the cost of providing for the neglected political education of the people, *which must then be attended to* if they are to hold their own. [The rise of Liberal Clubs, never before heard of, soon proved this.] The Conservatives who collect the suffrage of stolidity will be the first to profit by the Ballot. In an uneducated nation the 'stupid' are always the majority, and the Tories have so often profited by the fact, that they will be the 'stupid party' themselves if they throw away the mighty chance now before them.

"The working class accept the Ballot, not because it will very early benefit their order, but because it is an indispensable condition to their being able to benefit themselves. Therefore, let no one be apprehensive of the change which will approach with the Ballot. In politics nothing approaches ; everything has to be fetched.

"The fear of the Ballot is as old as England. It is the fear lest another should take his own way, and not take yours. It is in religion as well as in politics, and not easily eradicated. Error (it was an early maxim of mine) is like a serpent alive at both ends ; if severed, it may still sting ; while it wriggles, it lives, and those who mean to end it must chop at it."

It would be futile to recite now this prediction concerning the Ballot, if the reader could not turn to the *Echo*, August 5, 1871, and read it there. The first election after the Ballot gave us a Tory Government, and old London Reformers bewailed to me that, after having laboured for fifty years to give the working class the power to be their own friends, they

used it to vote for those who always opposed their having a vote. The nature of a nation does not change all at once with power. All history gives examples which seem to be unobserved. The French Revolutionists did but do as they had been done by. It may be regretted that they did not do better. To pour on the Revolutionists the censure of Europe, and conceal that the censure belongs to those who made them what they were—is ignorant criticism. Liberty does not take care of people. It is intended to enable them to take care of themselves, and it generally takes them a long time to learn how to do it.

The story of the Ballot illustrates the characteristics of the English political mind in the last generation

## CHAPTER XCII.

### *ADVENTURES AT THE HOME OFFICE.*

(1870.)

It is good advice that a man should guard himself from misconception. But, do what he will, misconceptions will come to him. Then all he can do is to explain—stand to the truth and never mind.

At the time of the Reform League agitation in 1866, being a member of the executive, I was one of a deputation to the Home Office, to confer with Mr. Walpole concerning a meeting the League intended to hold in Hyde Park. The Government was then Tory, and the Tories are always against public meetings, as being unnecessary and inconvenient. Then (1866) they said : “We had Trafalgar Square to go to, and what better place could we have ? Hyde Park was impossible.” In 1888, twenty-two years later, they said “we could not have a better place than Hyde Park, and that Trafalgar Square was impossible.”

Mr. Walpole showed an honourable anxiety to prevent collision between the police and the people, for fear of “bloodshed,” which Mr. J. S. Mill said in Parliament, the next night, “the League firmly believed would result.” Mr. Walpole stood in the recess of a window at the Home Office, and our small deputation stood near him.

Mr. Beales stated that our object was “not to censure the Government, but to declare the public sentiment on the franchise,” and therefore we demanded permission to hold a public meeting in the park on Monday. Mr. Walpole (deprecatingly) : “Don’t ask me that.” After consulting with Lord

J. Manners, Mr. Walpole said, "Well, put your request in writing to me. I will consult my colleagues, and, that there may be no mistake, I will send an answer in writing." It was, however, agreed that we might occupy a platform that night in Hyde Park to dissuade people from assembling further.

Afterwards, being at the House of Commons, I told all this to many members who inquired what had occurred at the Home Office. Later, I went to Hyde Park to attend the dispersion meeting, and, being on the platform, I heard Mr. Beales announce that we had permission to hold a meeting on Monday night. Whereupon I asked him whether Mr. Walpole had since given him permission to do so, as I did not so understand him at our interview. The next morning a letter appeared from Mr. Walpole in *The Times*, stating that Mr. Beales's letter had been received, but no answer had been given. The same morning placards appeared, issued by the League, stating that a public meeting would be held in the park by Mr. Walpole's permission.

That morning, Mr. George Howell, secretary of the League, sent me by hand to Waterloo Chambers, Cockspur Street, a summons to attend another deputation to Mr. Walpole at 2 o'clock. At that hour I went there, but, seeing none of my colleagues, I supposed they had already arrived, and were in some room awaiting the interview. I asked to be shown to the deputation to Mr. Walpole, and I was told "there was no deputation; and Mr. Walpole himself was not at the Home Office." I said that was incredible, as I had been summoned to attend a deputation to him at 2 o'clock. Seeing that I was unconvinced, an officer said, I "had better see Mr. Walpole's secretary and satisfy myself." Accordingly I did so, and was told that "Mr. Walpole really had declined to receive any deputation." I answered that, "as the League had sent me notice to attend the interview, they should have sent me word it was not to be. I understood we were to see Mr. Walpole respecting his letter to *The Times*, and that I intended to say I for one thought Mr. Walpole right in his letter. The placard assumed that the meeting was agreed to, which was not my impression."

The secretary asked whether he might state that to Mr. Walpole. I answered "certainly." I went at once to the

Reform League, and explained to Mr. T. Bayley Potter, M.P., and other friends of the League present, what I had said at the Home Office, and learned then, for the first time, that Mr. Beales was decidedly under a different impression. Mr. P. A. Taylor asked me at the House of Commons the same day to put in writing what took place with Mr. Walpole, which I did, and placed it in the hands of Mr. John Stuart Mill, who, I knew, was always for the truth.

In the meantime Lord Derby in the House of Lords, speaking in defence of the Home Secretary, accused by his party of indecision, said : "Mr. Holyoake, one of the members of the deputation to Mr. Walpole, having seen the placard, *came* this morning to repudiate in the strongest terms Mr. Beales's proclamation. He spoke to many Liberal members last night at the House of Commons, informing them that Mr. Walpole had not given his consent to the meeting announced."

Mr. Walpole, on his part, stated in the House of Commons that, "in justice to a member of the Reform League, who is known to many members in this House, and who was present with the deputation—I mean Mr. Holyoake—he, in a manner which reflects infinite credit on him, *volunteered* to come to my office to-day. I was so busily engaged I could not see him, but he saw my private secretary, who came into my room immediately afterwards, and told me what had passed between them. I (Mr. Walpole) said, 'The words which you say were used by Mr. Holyoake are so important, let me, while they are fresh in your recollection, take them down.' The words taken down are these : 'He *came* to repudiate in the strongest terms Mr. Beales's proclamation. He perfectly understood Mr. Walpole to decline to sanction any meeting in the park, and to ask that an application for that should be made in writing. He spoke to many Liberal members last night, and also to Mr. Beales, *when the proclamation was being posted.*'"

Reciting these incidents serves to show by authentic instances how difficult it is to get at the truth of history, and how the simplest facts become transformed into what Carlyle would have called "curiously the reverse of truth." Even when the facts are fresh—not even an hour old—variations of them occur even while passing through the minds of educated official persons. Neither Lord Derby, Mr. Walpole, nor his secretary,

could have any intention of perverting the truth, and yet the perversion transpired on the part of each of them. Mr. Walpole said that I "volunteered to come to his office." I did not "volunteer" to go to the Home Office. It never entered into my mind to go—I certainly never should have gone on any notion of my own. My going was solely through the instruction sent me by the secretary of the Reform League. It was quite unforeseen by me that I should enter the secretary's room. It was purely incidental that I was asked by an official to do so. It was to account for my acquiescence in seeing the secretary that I mentioned the subject of the placard. The officer in the corridor of the Home Office told me "Mr. Walpole was not in the building." Yet Mr. Walpole said "he was busily engaged there." My words as related by the private secretary, and as taken down by Mr. Walpole, were that "I came to repudiate in the strongest terms Mr. Beales's proclamation." I did not go for any such purpose. The words taken down represent me as saying "I spoke to Mr. Beales when the proclamation was being posted." I never saw Mr. Beales at that time. I was not present when the proclamation was posted. My words were : "I spoke to him the same night at Hyde Park." That was before the placards were printed.

The *Express*, the evening issue of the *Daily News*, remarked that the Tory papers commended me, the *Standard* describing me as "a man of high honour and probity, whose opinions, however offensive to the general feeling of society, had not prevented him from commanding the respect of all who knew his reverence for truth, and his thorough loyalty in all dealings with friend or foe."

It is not a matter of suspicion when any one is commended by his adversaries, unless it appears that he has abandoned his professed principles to win their praise.

Notwithstanding my explanations, the Reform League regarded me as a traitor who had gone down to the Home Office privately, and made a communication against them. A great meeting was held, within a few days of these events, at the Agricultural Hall. Mr. Mill asked me to accompany him from the House of Commons to the hall, and afterwards I returned with him to the House. It was well I was in his company, as my colleagues of the Reform League were wrathful

with me. Had I done what they supposed, their indignation would have been justified. Certainly the version of the affair given by Ministers was calculated to confirm their impressions.

Mr. Walpole for a time fared no better at the hands of his colleagues than I did with mine. They accused him of weakness in giving way to the League Radicals. They even said he wept before the deputation. Lord John Manners could have contradicted that, as he was present, but he made no sign. Had it not been for my accidental testimony, which, being that of a political opponent, satisfied both Houses, it was said that Mr. Walpole must have resigned. On the following Sunday he sent me a handsome letter of acknowledgment. At no time did I ever speak to Mr. Walpole, nor did he ever speak to me. My action with regard to him was public and not personal.

Afterwards some Radicals enclosed bread pills in small bottles, labelled them "Walpole's tears," and sold them at Reform League meetings, which was ill treatment of a Minister who had shown honourable scruples against firing upon them.

Mr. Walpole was the first Home Secretary who, so far as we knew, ever showed consideration for the people at his own peril.

On the day when the Hyde Park railings fell, the Reform League went in procession to the gates. As I was one of the executive, I accompanied my colleagues. Mr. Beales was to attempt to enter the gates, when, the police opposing him, a question of assault was to be raised, and legal opinion taken as to the legality of closing the gates against the people. The throng was dense about the entrance. A man in a rough cap and round jacket—in appearance like an ostler—thrust a watch in my vest pocket, saying, "Take care of that the next time." I thought he might be a thief who, being followed, was planting a watch he had stolen on me to get rid of it. But on taking out the watch I saw it was my own. I had no time to thank the man, who darted through the crowd to keep the real thief in sight. The man was a detective, who had seen the theft of my watch, had taken it from the man, and restored it to me.

Thus ended my adventures on the Hyde Park question.

## CHAPTER XCIII.

### *STORY OF A LOST LETTER.*

(1870.)

IN 1870 I had expressed, in some journal or speech, the opinion that Lord Palmerston's wilful and hasty recognition (1851) of the Government of the usurper, Louis Napoleon, was discreditable to the Crown and injurious to the English nation, as openly sanctioning the massacre of thousands of French citizens, of the imprisonment of its Parliament and expatriation of many eminent men, who withstood the illegality of the false President. It was a great affront to the majority of Frenchmen, who would be incensed at England giving official countenance to Bonapartist treachery and assassination. In what way this opinion came under the notice of Mr. Gladstone I now forget, but he was kind enough and considerate enough to write me a letter, in which he explained the facts of that affair.

On February 3, 1852, Lord John Russell explained that Lord Palmerston had sent an approval to Lord Normanby, our ambassador at Paris, of the usurpation of Louis Napoleon. Lord Palmerston said "it was a misrepresentation of the fact to say that he had given instructions to Lord Normanby inconsistent with the relations of general intercourse between England and France.

What Lord Palmerston did was this. He wrote to the British ambassador at Paris (Lord Normanby), December 5, 1851, saying that he had been commanded by her Majesty to instruct him not to make any change in his relations with the French Government. "It is her Majesty's desire that nothing should be done which would even wear the appearance of an

interference of any kind in the internal affairs of France." At the same time M. Turgot said he had heard from M. Walewski (the French ambassador in London) that Lord Palmerston had expressed to him his entire approbation of the act of the President, and his conviction that he (Louis Napoleon) could not have acted otherwise than he had done. Lord Normanby complained that this "placed him in an awkward position for misrepresentation and suspicion." Lord Palmerston replied next day that if "Lord Normanby wishes to know my own opinion on the change which has taken place in France, it is that such a state of antagonism had arisen between the President and the Assembly that it was becoming every day more clear that their co-existence would not be of long duration; and it seemed to me better for the interests of France, and through them for the interest of the rest of Europe, that the power of the President should prevail."

The representative of the French nation naturally regarded this as the opinion of the Government, being given by a Minister of the Crown at the Foreign Office, and it was cited by the confederates of the usurper as proof that Liberal Parliamentary England was in favour of a murderous despotism being imposed by arms on the French people.

On February 17, 1852, Lord John Russell advised the dismissal of Lord Palmerston from the office of Foreign Secretary on the ground that "he had, first, in a conversation with the French ambassador, and next, in a despatch to Lord Normanby, expressed officially his approval of the recent proceedings of Louis Napoleon," contrary to the following instructions, laid down by her Majesty in 1850, for the guidance of her Secretary :—

"The Queen requires, first, that Lord Palmerston will distinctly state what he proposes, in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she is giving her royal sanction. Secondly, having once given her Royal sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister. Such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of

what passes between him and the foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken based upon that intercourse ; to receive the foreign despatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they must be sent off."

Lord Palmerston was dismissed, and was succeeded at the Foreign Office by Earl Granville.

From this instruction it appears that Lord Palmerston two years previously had sent instructions to foreign Courts without the knowledge of her Majesty, and had in other cases changed the purport of what had been submitted to her. The Queen's note is also instructive to those foolish, misleading or uninformed politicians who continually assure the people that the English monarchy is practically a democracy, and that the interfering power of the Crown is ideal. The Crown has the power of vetoing any international instruction the Democracy may wish to give through its representatives. The Foreign Minister is simply the mouthpiece of the Crown. The Crown has a voice—and the people are dumb.

Mr. Gladstone, with a brevity beyond my power, explained to me that the Crown did in the case of Lord Palmerston's conduct what the people would have done. The Queen deserves very high credit for her action in dismissing him, reassuring the French people that England was neutral, intended no interference in their affairs, and lent no encouragement or sanction to the usurpation imposed upon them.

After receiving (1870) the letter of Mr. Gladstone, in which he explained all this, I placed it in the *Edinburgh Review* of that date and left it in a cab. After fruitless efforts to recover the lost articles, they were advertised for in *The Times*, in one of the numbers of that journal which was photographed for circulation in Paris during the siege. The photographed copies of *The Times* were dropped over Paris from balloons, and the contents were magnified and well scanned, but as my lost letter was never heard of, I concluded that it had probably got into the hands of some intelligent and covetous reader, and I have sometimes attended sales of autograph letters expecting to find it.

## CHAPTER XCIV.

### *THE SCOTT-RUSSELL PLOT.*

(1871.)

A FEW years ago, the Liberal world in London and at large—so far as the outer world took notice of metropolitan affairs—were surprised by an announcement that eminent peers, not before known for Radical partisanship, were about to place themselves at the head of a new movement, which was to do great things. The working classes were to be taken from pestiferous dwellings in crowded towns and put, as Lord Hampton said, out “in the open,” and other advantages, never dreamt of by the unenterprising Liberals who had hitherto been looked up to by the people, were to be bestowed upon them. Mr. Scott-Russell, a naval enthusiast, who had built the *Great Eastern* ship, was the constructor of this new political vessel for carrying Tory Democratic passengers into the Conservative haven.

Certain working class leaders<sup>1</sup> were invited to form a committee or syndicate of popular sponsors of the new project. All were known to be on the Liberal side, but some, like the teetotal cabmen, were not bigoted ; they preferred fishing in Liberal waters provided fish were to be caught, but, if not, they had no invincible repugnance to trying another stream. They called this “being above the narrowness of party” ; sometimes they represented it as “taking an independent view” of things—phrases honestly used by men of conscientious conception of principle, but whose scruples these patriots,

<sup>1</sup> The best known were Robert Applegarth, George Howell, H. Broadhurst, Lloyd Jones, George Potter, Daniel Guile, P. Barry.

with principles turning on a universal pivot, burlesqued. There were others among them, men of consistency, who were curious to find out what these unexpected friends of the people (whom Mr. Scott-Russell assumed to represent) really intended. They asked time to consider the project to which they were to be committed. Their meetings were held at a pleasant restaurant near King Lud's in Ludgate Hill, and, as good dinners were provided to assist their deliberations, they were not impatient to come to a decision. Like men having responsible business on hand, they felt precipitation unbecoming ; they took time and dinners, too. They made suggestions, and adjourned until Mr. Scott-Russell had considered them. Then it became necessary to dine again to receive his opinion. When adjournments were played out, they, with show of reason, intimated that it was desirable that they should know who the noblemen were who were at the head of the project which they were to commend to the working class, whom these leaders were supposed to influence. A further dinner was necessary for receiving and weighing this information. It was conceded by the constructor of the *Great Eastern* that this committee should see a list of the names, which, however, were not to be divulged.

If there really were persons of eminence desirous of rendering some new service to the people, the intention was to be respected. There was one member of the committee, Mr. Robert Applegarth, who never thought there was anything in the scheme, and there were others who did not feel any sure ground under their feet. Thus the inspection of the list of peers who had popular ideas ready to put in force, was interesting. That the names were to be held secret did not inspire confidence. How could honest leaders of the people command a project of which they could not disclose the authority which alone could inspire trust. Mr. Applegarth prudently suggested to his colleagues that, since they were not to possess or copy the list, and might not remember all the names upon it, it would be well that one of them should fix in his memory the first two names, another should notice the second two, and so on through the list. Afterwards, when they met, they could verify the whole list of names appended to a document which was to be published without the names. It was observed that the

names were all in the same handwriting as the text of the address prepared for their issue.

In a way never explained to the public, the list of the names—which, in the way described, came into the hands of the committee—met the sharp journalistic eyes of Mr. Stephen Girard, of the *New York Herald*, and were by him made known, much to the chagrin of Mr. Scott-Russell and to the astonishment of the peers, who instantly became subjects of comment. Each of them immediately wrote to the papers disavowing any knowledge of the affair or complicity in it. Thus it happened that the political Leviathan ship for carrying Democratic passengers into the sea of Conservatism never set sail.

Knowing all the members of the Scott-Russell Committee, their proceedings interested me, and I wrote in the public press reasons for regarding the project as suspicious in origin and tendency.

Mr. Scott-Russell had genius in his own walk. His conception of a great ship, so ponderous that the waves should not vibrate beneath it, so powerful that the storm should not retard it, showed naval daring; but the sea of politics was unknown to him, and the craft he put upon it was of antiquated build.

Every aspirant for power, who has ambition for personal ascendancy, every despot who understands his business, holds out promises of what excellent things he will do if he be only secured a position whereby he may be able to act. When the power is once put into his hands, he is able to defy those who dare to claim the fulfilment of their expectations, as did Louis Napoleon, who promised great things to the working classes, and shot them when they asked for them. In the meantime the policy of holding out great hopes of this kind has its success. Like the "confidence trick," it finds a succession of credulous persons ready made. There are always a number of people ready to have something done for them, and very unwilling to be put to the trouble of doing it for themselves.

My reason for opposing the Scott-Russell plot was that Liberal working men could not join in it without foregoing their principles. A man is free to change his principles without reproach when his honest view of duty dictates it. But he

should know what he is doing, and not go on pretending to be on one side when he has gone over to another. If working men calling themselves Liberals accept Tory leadership, they have left their party. If they accepted this Tory-peer scheme, in the belief that the Tory party would carry it out, they must at elections canvass for and vote for Tory candidates. It were vain to adopt a programme and not provide a majority in Parliament to give effect to it. He who chooses new leaders proclaims his distrust of his old ones, and has changed sides whether he knows it or not. Not thinking it to the credit of the working classes to be under illusions, I publicly explained the nature of the Tory democratical scheme.

If Conservatives come to profess, as they sometimes do, to be in favour of a Liberal measure, respect such concession, and give them, so far as such measure extends, aid and credit for it. But that is a different thing from changing sides and undertaking to sustain a party opposed to the main principles you profess to hold.

The names of the peers who were alleged to be the "high contracting parties" in this plot were Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, Mr. Disraeli, the Earls of Carnarvon and Lichfield, Lord Henry Lennox, Lord John Manners, Sir John Pakington, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, and the Duke of Richmond. Mr. P. Barry wrote to *The Times* saying that "Mr. Scott-Russell had the signatures of the lords," which they naturally repudiated in successive letters to the newspapers. The Seven-Leagued programme to which these noble Socialistic Democrats were alleged to have given their assent, is not without historic interest to-day. Its planks were as follows :—

1. Something like the United States Homestead Law, with modern improvements, is to be enacted, by which "the families of our workmen" may be removed from the crowded quarters of the towns, and given detached homesteads in the suburbs.

2. The Commune is to be established so far as to confer upon all counties, towns, and villages, a perfect organisation for self-government, with powers for the acquisition and disposal of lands for the common good.

3. Eight hours of honest and skilled work shall constitute a day's labour.

4. Schools for technical instruction shall be established at the expense of the State, in the midst of the homesteads of the proletariat.

5. Public markets shall be erected in every town, at the public expense, for the sale of goods of the best quality, in small quantities at wholesale prices.

6. There shall be established, as parts of the public service, places of public recreation, knowledge, and refinement.

7. The railways shall be purchased and conducted at the public expense and for the common good, as the post-office service is now conducted

## CHAPTER XCV.

### *RETICENCE OF THE BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.*

(1872.)

THE Bishop of Peterborough was a prelate remarkable alike for timidity and boldness. The public were often amazed at his ecclesiastical candour. But he had apprehensive intervals, as this chapter will show. In 1871 he and the Dean of Norwich announced their intention to deliver controversial discourses in that city.

Wet, half-melted snow covered the ground, the sky above was dark and disturbed, a cold haze made chill and damp the crowd which stood in the silent cathedral yard on Tuesday night (December 12, 1871) waiting for the cathedral doors to open. No city in England has been so fortunate as Norwich in its bishops. It has had no bad bishop in our time. The memory of man runneth not back to the contrary. The preacher, however, whom we waited to hear was not the Bishop of Norwich, but the Bishop of Peterborough. In the pulpit this bishop appeared somewhat short, stoutly built, and had the look of a man who ate more than his spiritual profession required. Nevertheless the bishop's discourse was admirable. It had the chief qualities of an oration. It was delivered with elasticity: the action, though not always graceful, was pleasantly vehement, and there was a manly energy in the preacher's tones.

Dr. Goulburn, the Dean, was a very pleasant gentleman to see. He was one of those radiant divines who diffuse a sense of satisfaction around them, looking on life with a dignity that appears never to have been distressed. You saw at once that

his "lines had fallen unto him in pleasant places, and that he had a goodly heritage." Yet, notwithstanding Dr. Meyrick Goulburn's sunbeam aspect, he threw out some venomous little epithets at his supposed adversaries which need not be recounted here.

The Bishop's alluring subject was the "Demonstration of the Spirit." Who could expect the future Archbishop of York, whose revenue would be princely, whose palace looked down on the lotus waters of the Ouse, whose earthly home an angel might envy, to be appreciative of the humble ethical philosophy which knew none of these things ? To the Bishop of Peterborough whose worldly welfare was provided for by a happy destiny and a powerful patron, Christianity must seem "demonstrably" true. Mean, poor, and even wicked must seem the scruples of those who find themselves condemned to perplexity and patience ; while to others, who mean no better and strive less to realise human good, opulence and honour fall. To the prelates of that day, the efforts of obscure moralists, who, with penurious means, unaided and contemned, struggled to multiply secular comfort, to cheer the unfortunate with the consolations of duty, and kindle the fire of reason in cold and abandoned minds, must seem pitiful, and to be sufficiently recognised by being scolded into grace.

In the cathedral city of Norwich, where prelatical doctrine had the advantage of State splendour and official advocacy, it might be expected that civil equity would prevail under its supreme influence. Yet the ratepayers there had no right to the use of the public halls for which they paid. To obtain one in which to reply to the Bishop of Peterborough was impossible.

A Dissenter in Norwich, who was proprietor of a hall eligible for the proposed review of the "Cathedral Discourses," said he would let it for the purpose if he knew that it would not be displeasing to the Lord Bishop of Peterborough. I thereupon wrote to the bishop upon the subject. My chambers were then at 20, Cockspur Street, Trafalgar Square, London. The Bishop was at the Athenæum Club, Pall Mall, and our correspondence was conducted hardly a hundred yards apart.

Several letters passed between us. I did not ask that the Bishop should advise the cathedral authorities to use their influence in favour of controversial equity, or that he should

interfere in the affairs of a diocese in which he had no authority, but simply to say on his own part whether it was distasteful to him that a hall should be conceded in which his Discourses should be reviewed on the part of those whose attention and concurrence he had challenged.

In his first discourse, the Bishop urged that it was "the duty of the Christian to manifest the truth in love"; but he declined to manifest it at all. He told us how the first apostles went to Christ, saying, "Master, tell us." But the Bishop was not of his Master's mind, and would tell us nothing.

In the end I did deliver a review of the Bishop's polemical orations; but it was owing to the independence of Mr. R. A. Cooper, who lent a large room in his Albion Mills for the purpose.

Why should the Bishop show such timidity in giving an opinion asked of him? He had nothing to fear. No one in Norwich could harm him. A bishop is set high above clergy and deans that he may be independent and discharge even Christian duty fearlessly.

Had he spoken the one word which would cost him nothing, he had taught a lesson of toleration to a city which wanted it much, and have won for Christianity a respect on the part of adversaries which the most brilliant clerical argument would fail to create.

A curious circumstance occurred while Dr. Magee was in Norwich. Mr. R. A. Cooper, before mentioned, the largest sugar baker in East Anglia, had a place of business opposite the cathedral. During a successful career in Cincinnati he had acquired American ways of vivid speech, and as Dean Goulburn was an adversary of ponderous orthodoxy, Mr. Cooper offered to take the cathedral as a sugar bakery, it being little used and he in want of larger premises. The Bishop being the Dean's guest at the time was told this bit of American irreverent humour, when the clever Bishop went elsewhere and declared that the Liberation Society of the Nonconformists had "shown itself willing to turn churches into drinking saloons or shoe factories"—though the Nonconformists had no knowledge of Mr. Cooper's isolated saying, had no more to do with it, or sympathy with it, than Dr. Goulburn himself.

The Nonconformists resented the wanton imputation upon them, without knowing how it originated.

## CHAPTER XCVI.

### *GENEROSITY OF THE BISHOP OF OXFORD.*

(1872.)

IN two instances I had personal opportunity of forming an opinion of Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, and in both he displayed more fairness and candour than I expected from a bishop. Perhaps my limited acquaintance with prelates obliged me to judge them from a narrow standpoint. The Bishop of Exeter had not given me a favourable impression of the clerical bench. I knew of no case among my friends in which a reference to them in the case of injustice or intolerance had been favourably entertained, and we all knew that in the House of Lords the votes of the prelates were mostly given against the people.

Oddfellows as well as the co-operators were liable before 1852 to be robbed by their officers without redress in law. A secretary had appropriated £4,000 of the money belonging to widows and orphans of the Manchester Unity. When placed in the dock in that city, he was dismissed, as the law then gave no protection to such societies. When the Friendly Societies Bill in 1852 came before the House of Lords, the Bishop of Oxford raised objections to the legalisation of the Manchester Unity, on the ground that I had written their Prize Lectures, which he therefore concluded must be atheistic.

The Grand Master of that day, Mr. W. B. Smith, hearing this objection, asked, "Has your lordship ever read them?" The Bishop said very frankly he had not. "Does not your lordship think," rejoined the Grand Master, "that you ought to do so before pronouncing a deterrent judgment on them?" "Well," said the Bishop, "perhaps I ought. Send me a copy

and I will do so." At the next interview, the Bishop said candidly that, "after reading them, he must admit that they were not irreligious—neither were they religious."

The Grand Master replied : " We have a quarter of a million of members in our Order, and among them are included some of every religious persuasion in the land. How could the Lectures be ' religious ' in your lordship's sense without leading to dissent and theological controversy in all our lodges—which would be an evil, and inconsistent with that concord and brotherhood our Order is designed to promote ? "

The Bishop admitted the force of this representation, and withdrew his opposition to the Friendly Societies Act, which was afterwards passed.

Some years later when, acting as Commissioner of the *Morning Star*, I was writing upon "Rural Life in Bucks," I became acquainted with the condition of the labourers of Gawcott, who had, as they believed, a grievance. A commodious schoolhouse in which their little children were educated had been taken from them, and the school was held in a cottage quite inadequate for the purpose. The parents believed that the schoolhouse was given to them by the kindness of the wife of a former vicar. For years the poor people had been lamenting their deprivation of the schoolroom. No one was able to help them. I said to a friend who sympathised with them, "Why do they not put their case before the Duke of Buckingham, who lives within four miles of them ? If there be an injustice, what is the advantage of ducal influence, of which we hear so much, if it be not exercised for redress in such a case as this ? " The answer was, "No one had trust or hope in the Duke, and the poor people are rather afraid of him." "Then why not apply to the bishop of their diocese ? " I answered. "These poor people, who mostly attend the church, have claims upon him, and surely he is not afraid of the Duke ? " That remedy was thought to be more hopeless still.

Upon hearing this, though I was not exactly the person to put their case before the Bishop with advantage, I offered to do so, and accordingly I wrote to the Bishop of Oxford. Since they were hopeless, no harm could come of it. Things could not be worse if no redress resulted. My letter was as follows :—

"**M**Y LORD,—Standing without the pale of your lordship's communion, I have no personal claim upon your attention, but I unhesitatingly assume that this circumstance will not disincite you to give ear to a demand if commended by fitness and humanity.

"It is this. At Gawcott, in Bucks, is a commodious village school erected by the active charity of the wife of the then incumbent—to be held and used in trust for the benefit of the Gawcott poor. This school, the villagers say, has been appropriated to the purposes of a Middle Class School by the Rev. Mr. Whitehead. For twelve years the infant poor of Gawcott have been displaced, ill-trained, and personally ill-treated—suffering in health and morals. Their situation is a public scandal. Herewith I beg to enclose your lordship certain public letters written by myself after personal inspection of the place. In fairness I add others defensive of the incumbent. The Rev. Mr. Whitehead, the reputed appropriator, is now leaving Gawcott, if I am correctly informed, and is about to sell the schoolhouse, which, if suffered, will complicate or compromise the claim of the poor to its use. There may be a remedy for this wrong in equity, but these poor villagers can never invoke it. The Rev. Mr. Whitehead is undoubtedly a kind-hearted gentleman, who has done much in his way for the Gawcott poor. The villagers speak affectionately of him in many respects, but nevertheless say 'he has defrauded us of our school.'

"My lord, whether these poor people are acting under a painful delusion, or suffering, as I believe, a great wrong, they are equally entitled to your all-powerful consideration, which I am told is never refused to the humblest person in your diocese who really deserves it. If these villagers are under a wrong impression, let an inquiry dispel it ; let the Trust Deed be published. They will be instructed, they will be satisfied : and, if they are in error, the Rev. Mr. Whitehead will be vindicated. If, however, the reverend gentleman has acted wrongfully, none but your lordship can do these poor villagers justice. You can prohibit the sale of the school, and restore to these poor children that education which a merciful lady of your Church once provided for them. The people of Gawcott are poor, are timid, are despairing. They pray for a powerful friend. They hoped

and ought to have found one in the Mayor of Buckingham. He, however, is silent, fearing the ducal influence he would confront. The Duke does not—as it would be graceful and noble to do—volunteer them protection. These poor villagers should be able to obtain redress from their own clergyman, but he is the alleged offender. You, their bishop, high in holy and independent authority, may not hesitate to act where mayors fear and dukes neglect, and for the sake of these friendless villagers I entreat your lordship's interference.—I am, your lordship's obedient servant,

“GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.”

The Bishop sent a courteous reply, and said that he would request the Rural Dean to inquire into the case, and when he received the report he would send it to me.

The cottage room in Gawcott, in which the poor children received their humble instruction, was as unsatisfactory as any school I ever entered. From fifty to sixty children occupied raised seats, as in a theatre. The young woman who acted as teacher stood in their midst, without room to move among them. Indeed, they were so crowded that any of them could be reached with the cane. Without other ventilation in the room than the fireplace, the air was unbreathable, and the pallid, consumptive look of the teacher showed that she found it so. The parents complained that if one child caught the measles all the children had it, and then the school was closed for a time. The description of the state of things as I found them, which I published in the *Morning Star*, I enclosed in my letter.

The Bishop was as good as his word, and in due time sent me the report of the Rural Dean and a copy of the Trust Deed, asking my opinion upon them, whereupon I wrote to the Bishop as follows, from which the reader will gather what the Rural Dean's report was:—

“MY LORD,—I am under obligation for the courtesy and consideration with which you have made inquiries respecting the allegations of my letter of February 1st, and sent for my perusal the replies you have received. These enable me to present to the villagers a clearer and more definite view of the

case than I was able to put before. There is clearly an end of the alarm that the Rev. Mr. Whitehead is about to sell the school. That gentleman's denial is conclusive. I dismiss this point. The grievance of the villagers is substantially this :—

“They say the schoolhouse was built for the benefit of the infant poor of Gawcott ; that the instruction given was to be under the direction of the incumbent is not in question.

“They say that the object of the benevolent foundress of the school, the wife of the incumbent of that day, was to provide a place where the infant children of the poor wives of the village could be sent during the day.

“They say that this was the meaning of the words in the Trust Deed ‘to permit and suffer the said schoolhouse to be used and enjoyed in such manner for the religious instruction of the poor children of the said hamlet.’ They say that the schoolhouse was used in this way for the eight years previous to the Rev. Mr. Whitehead’s coming to the hamlet, when he turned the poor children out of the school.

“They say that the poor children, 70 in number, were crowded for years into a small room unfit and unhealthy, where it was a sin to put them and a scandal to keep them.

“It is never difficult anywhere to find middle-class subscribers who, lured by the offer of a superior education for their sons, will not be of opinion that their own interests include the rights of others usurped by them.

“The Trust Deed shows that Mr. Whitehead had a right to use the place as he saw fit, but for ‘the instruction of the *poor children*.’ But the use to which he put it was not that, but was for the benefit of the middle-class children. The benefits he offers do not meet the want of an infant school and were not so intended, as he has kept up a cruel sort of child-pen, under the name of an infant school, in the village. Is the rural dean aware that Mr. Whitehead’s offer of instruction is at an age when the children begin to go to work and cannot use it ? It is a good, but comes too late. Mr. Whitehead’s Middle School is entirely praiseworthy and needed in Gawcott, and, had these middle-class parents built a school for themselves, there would have been but one unmixed feeling of gratitude towards the reverend founder.

“Mr. Whitehead’s evidence shows that he found the school-

house occupied as an infant school. Only three children under eight are now in the school. There were eighty under that age before Mr. Whitehead's time.

"Mr. Whitehead admits that he found the room in the occupation of an infant school. He does not deny that it had been so occupied for the eight years during which it had been built. He states that he called together the subscribers of the school. But he does not say whether these were the parties to the Trust Deed, and who subscribed to build the school. Should he not have called together the parents of the poor children who were to be turned out to make way for the children of these subscribers? Had these parents consented, Mr. Whitehead's case would be made out.

"Apart from any truth or relevance there may be in these representations—which do not affect the right to dispose of the school for other uses than those which the villagers desire—power to redress the evil which exists is, I believe, nevertheless, in your lordship's hands. Were you to express an opinion that you think, under the circumstances, the farmers, whose children are now educated in the schoolhouse, should build a new school for their own use, they would, under the encouragement of your lordship's opinion, do it. They are well able to do it, and I have ascertained from personal inquiries that many would be disposed to take that course, if commended to them by your lordship. I have the honour to be, your lordship's faithful servant,

"GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE."

Before making these representations I visited Gawcott again, called upon the officers of the church and several of the farmers, and suggested the erection of a schoolhouse for themselves, which would be honourable to them and insure the gratitude and good feeling of the villagers. The Bishop very generously did express his opinion and advised them to build for themselves. A new schoolhouse was built, and the old one restored to the villagers, which they enjoy to this day.

Considering how unlikely, and I fear how unacceptable, a person I was to interfere in the matter, the willing and courteous attention given to my representations impressed me, as it did all the people in the district who knew or heard of the corre-

spondence, with grateful admiration of the impartial generosity of the Bishop of Oxford.

The Bishop was not my adversary. He had not, as the Bishop of Peterborough had done, delivered lectures against views I held, and in a manner challenged my answer. I was not a resident in Bishop Wilberforce's diocese, and had no right, except on purely public grounds, to interfere in its affairs. It showed an intrinsic love of justice on his part that he should give heed to what he might rightfully regard as alien representations.

When the Bishop died some years after, from a fall from his horse, one night in the House of Lords I listened to various encomiums on his character. Speaker after speaker pronounced eulogiums on his zeal, his eloquence, and his various attainments —no one gave any instance which impressed the public mind as to the qualities of his heart and mind ; and, though I was not the person qualified to lay a chaplet on the Bishop's grave, I wrote to *The Times* citing his conduct at Gawcott in illustration of his character.

## CHAPTER XCVII.

### *FLIGHT OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON FROM BRIGHTON.*

(1872.)

THOSE who otherwise followed Landor's advice and "waited," next saw Napoleon III. a fugitive and an exile. In 1872, he was at Brighton at the time of the meeting of the British Association. There arrived also a Frenchman of repute both as a politician (who had fought at the barricades) and as a man of science—Wilfrid de Fonvielle. He and his brother Ulric were my oldest friends in Paris. I had been their guest. Ulric, a man of accomplishments and courage, had had trouble with the Bonapartes. It was he who accompanied Victor Noir on his visit to Prince Pierre Napoleon. But he was not an amiable person to call upon, for he shot Victor Noir dead without provocation, and fired three times at his friend Ulric de Fonvielle, but without killing him. The Emperor had saved the Prince from being hanged as he ought to have been. If the reader bears this in mind, he will understand the perturbation of the Emperor on having to confront Wilfrid de Fonvielle, who was not indisposed to avenge the attempt to shoot his brother Ulric, as I have to relate.

It was with Wilfrid that I was most intimate. On arriving in Brighton he came to consult with me about lodgings, as the list at the Reception Room was exhausted. His intention was to join his friend and co-balloonist, Mr. Glaisher, who had taken rooms at Cannon Place, in the rear of the Grand Hotel. As Mr. Glaisher had not arrived, I induced the landlady to allow M. de Fonvielle, his friend, to occupy his chambers until

he came. Thus he resided within a few yards of the apartments of the Empress, and from her window she could see his house. But he neither intended, nor sought, nor wished that situation.

The Napoleonic fête day immediately preceded the meeting of the British Association, and many Frenchmen, who were then in Brighton, had congregated a good deal about the hotel. Thinking the sound of the "Marseillaise" might remind the Emperor that liberty was still living in France, some Frenchmen paid a band to play it under the Emperor's window ; but M. de Fonvielle very properly stepped into the hotel to inquire if there were any objection to it on the part of the proprietors, who were responsible for the convenience of their guests. Not obtaining the information, he descended the steps. The band-master, seeing him come from the hotel, thought he was one of the Emperor's suite, and one of them asked whether it was right to play. On being told by Fonvielle that "he did not know," the bandsman said, "Do you not belong to the hotel ? Seeing you come out, I thought you belonged to the Emperor's party." It would have been easy to mislead the band and get the terrible "Marseillaise" played, but the answer was that of a gentleman—"No, I do not belong to the hotel ; I am not of the Emperor's party." It ended in no music being played. The band offered to go to Cannon Place, and play the "Marseillaise" to De Fonvielle.

On the night of the address of the President (Dr. W. B. Carpenter) in the Dome, I was standing near him, and De Fonvielle next to me. All at once the audience on the platform and floor of the Dome rose, we knew not why. Looking round, I said to de Fonvielle, "Here is the Emperor," who was walking, with the aid of a stick, towards us. M. de Fonvielle, not remembering where he was, was disgusted to see such deference paid to the expelled adventurer who had brought such misery on the people of France. De Fonvielle and other Frenchmen cried out, "Shame!" "Shame!" "Don't do that!" I said ; "remember you are on English ground, and that the Emperor is an exile here. As such, he is the guest of the nation. We receive him as we would a Republican or a Communistic exile. Tyrant and patriot stand here on neutral ground." My friend at once desisted, but his excitement was pardonable.

The quick eye of the Emperor knew De Fonvielle, and they steadily looked at each other. The brilliant audience in the Dome settled down, and Dr. Carpenter was proceeding with his address, when a local agitation was observed opposite the ex-Emperor, between the small, compact, quick de Fonvielle and a large, diffusive, rather phlegmatic clergyman of the Church of England (Dr. Griffiths), one of the secretaries of the local committee. Rapid and subdued words, a sharp flash of the eyes on the part of the French aeronaut, a sort of aquarium look on the part of the divine, and a hasty seizing of a small parcel by the Gaul, were all that could be made out. Immediately de Fonvielle arose with a shrug of excitement. Doubling his marine cap under his arm, and raising himself erect, he marched in front of the Emperor straight out of the Dome, merely stopping as he passed me to say, "I shall see you again."

Not all the practised sagacity of the Emperor could make out that series of movements, of ambiguous meaning. Doubt soon reached the point of perturbation, for the dark-headed, square-shouldered, gleaming-eyed Frenchman returned, and striding in front of the Emperor, who might well feel relieved when he had passed him, De Fonvielle was next seen in fierce altercation with Dr. Griffiths, to whom he presented some oval packet not much unlike a small Orsini shell (as the Emperor might think who had remembrances of those missives), and then withdraw it, thrusting it into his own pocket. Immediately the clerical gentleman began an excited speech, whereupon the Frenchman threw the packet to him. The Doctor opened it, and said something to De Fonvielle which appeared to appease him. Meanwhile Dr. Carpenter, knowing nothing of the bye-play under his reading desk, went on quoting Pope until the end.

The imperial visitor must have given the Empress that evening a curious account of the mysterious proceedings in which, to his astonishment, a respectable clergyman of the Church of England appeared to take a conscious part. The mystery was never explained to his Majesty ; but it was all comedy, not tragedy. Dr. Griffiths, amid his many labours as local secretary, had acquired a sore throat, and it occurred to him that while the President was speaking he might find time to try a lozenge as a remedy. Seeing De Fonvielle in aeronaut

marine dress, he took him for one of the assistants provided by the forethought of Mr. Alderman Hallett, and said to him, "I should be glad if you would take a parcel for me to Mr. Glaisher." "Mr. Glaisher, do you say?" "Yes, Mr. Glaisher," replied Dr. Griffiths. "Then I will go with pleasure. I have been all over Brighton looking for my friend Mr. Glaisher. Please put his address on the parcel, and I will go and inquire for him." And accordingly he left the Dome as I have related. Mr. Glaisher and De Fonvielle were joint editors of a work on ballooning. De Fonvielle was the first man who took a balloon out of Paris during the siege, over the German lines, and he was most anxious to meet Mr. Glaisher. It was one of his objects in coming to Brighton, and for the hope of meeting him early he was willing to forego the pleasure of hearing the presidential address. In his eagerness to meet his friend, De Fonvielle had forgotten all about the Emperor, and passed before him without even seeing him.

When, however, he reached Mr. Glaisher's, he was discomfited and astounded. It was a chemist's shop. "Mon Dieu," exclaimed the curious Frenchman, "is my friend Glaisher a chemist and in business in Brighton, and he never to say a word about it? How reticent these English are! You must live among them to understand them." And he plunged into the shop.

"I want to see Mr. Glaisher, I have a message for him from a gentleman—a priest, I think—now at the Dome meeting. Tell him M. de Fonvielle wishes to see him." "I am Mr. Glaisher," said the chemist. "I have not the pleasure of knowing you. But what can I serve you with?" "Then what is this?" exclaimed the indignant balloonist, presenting his packet. "Why, it is a note from Dr. Griffiths, inclosing a shilling, saying he has a bad cold, and asking for a box of throat lozenges." "Mon Dieu! And has he sent me on this infernal errand? And I have lost the President's address, to buy lozenges for a person I don't know; and you are not my friend Glaisher, but a chemist?" And he darted from the shop, leaving the paper and the shilling. But soon reflecting that as a gentleman he was bound to account for the money he had received, he stepped back and consented to take the box.

Returning to the Dome he again marched up the reporters'

gangway, passing again before the Emperor, but no more regarding him in his new indignation at Dr. Griffiths, of whom he demanded whom he had taken him for, and why he had sent him to buy his lozenges. "You shall not have them," exclaimed the irate Gaul, after displaying them, and he thrust them back into his pocket. "You sent me to a chemist, sir, and not to my friend Glaisher." Dr. Griffiths, understanding at last what a mistake he had made, apologised ; his indignant messenger relented, and, handing the Rev. Doctor the box, peace was made. But the mystery of it was unintelligible to the Emperor and to the audience, who observed these Gallic movements. They certainly seemed ominous to me until De Fonvielle came and explained them.

It was known that the Empress did not regard the matter with the equanimity of her Imperial husband. The lady actually had fears of some attempt at assassination, which were not allayed by learning that De Fonvielle was actually living in Cannon Place, within a few yards of her own apartments in the Grand Hotel. He did not intend being there ; it was too far from the sections. This, however, was not known, or the Mayor, Mr. Cordy Burrows, who was rightly and assiduously solicitous for the comfort of the Empress, would have explained the matter to her. Mr. J. E. Mayall, the famous photographer, and chairman of the hotel company, gave orders that no French gentleman not of the Emperor's suite should be permitted to have apartments or to enter the hotel, and, at inconvenience to himself, acted as a guard of etiquette and peace while the Imperial visitors remained at the Grand Hotel.

But for the Empress, the Emperor would have remained in Brighton. He liked the gaiety of the New Pier, and the brightness of the scene from the Grand Hotel windows. The perilous journey the poor lady made to this country, after the affair of Sedan, and the affairs in Paris subsequently, had not been of a nature to reassure her. The Empress went over Hove Place House (the property of Mr. Mayall), which the Emperor contemplated taking. It seemed admirably suited to him—enclosed grounds, a handsome house, near the pier, yet out of the way of the town, and overlooking the open country Dykewards, where he could drive for days unobserved. But nothing could reconcile the illustrious lady to stay in the town.

There were other French gentlemen in Brighton besides M. de Fonvielle, but they were all engaged in scientific inquiry, and had no intention of diverting their attention from those pursuits. They were desirous, nevertheless, of showing the Emperor that they still maintained their political hostility towards him. When an Englishman has triumphed over his political adversary, he will be civil to him, and even pay him honour. The Emperor might have remained in Brighton with perfect security. The Scriptures say that certain people flee when no man pursueth. In a few days the novelty of the Imperial visit would have subsided. The Association would be gone ; the Frenchmen, too, would have departed to their homes. They were all philosophers engaged on ideas, <sup>2</sup> that never means other than limited resources to them. They remain poor that society, which disregards them while they live, may grow rich when they are dead.

Most lovers of the good fame of England have noticed how Court journalists and Court officials continually gave to the ex-Emperor and family their full reigning titles, ignoring the French people and the Republican Government who had expelled them in the public interest. This was international offensiveness. It was done at Brighton. M. de Fonvielle, being deputed by the French Government to report upon the laws of storms, resented the description of the late Emperor as " His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the French," and wrote to Mr. Griffith (not Dr. the Griffiths whose name has occurred in this narrative, but the Assistant-General Secretary) saying :—

" DEAR SIR,—I find that M. Louis Bonaparte and family are styled in a manner which is disregardful of the whole present state of things in France. I have no objection to meet the ex-Emperor in a scientific forum, but I should not be willingly a party in an Association which could be considered as giving some assistance to any demonstration against the French Government ; and I should protest energetically, humble as may be my individual position, against such a perversion of science for promoting the ends of hostile factions. Consequently I think I am justified in asking on what authority the Association has done this ?

" (Signed)                    W. DE FONVIELLE."

Mr. Griffith replied, saying—

“DEAR SIR,—It is to be regretted that you have felt it necessary to give a political significance to a matter which has in no way a political bearing. [This was not true.] It is as a foreigner who has always taken a prominent interest in science that the ticket has been given to the late Emperor of the French. By this course the Association has not intended to express any opinion on the position of the late Emperor of the French as either *de facto* or *de jure* ruler of France. [But it did it.]

“(Signed) G. GRIFFITH.”

The action of Mr. Griffith was better than his explanation. The next day a new list of foreigners attending the meeting was issued, in which “His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the French” was changed into “His Imperial Majesty Napoleon III.” Whether the ex-Emperor inquired why his title was changed I never heard.

The next time I saw the Emperor he was dead. I saw him twice at Chislehurst after his decease. Death had lent dignity to his face which it lacked when living. When he resided here as a libertine, when he returned as an Emperor, and again as an exile, the expression of his face was always that of an adventurer. Seeing his end in exile without honour, it was impossible not to feel that this world is not so bad as it is painted. Napoleon I. might have continued to sit on the throne of the Cæsars could his word have been depended upon, and the dead Usurper renewed and confirmed the impression of the world that no Bonaparte could be believed on his word nor trusted on his oath. When Napoleon III. made a triumphal entry into Bordeaux soon after the Coup d'Etat, it was arranged that from an arch of flowers, under which he was to pass, an imperial crown should hang, surmounted by the words, “He well deserves it.” But the wind blew away the crown, and when the Emperor passed under the arch only a rope with a noose at the end of it dangled there, with “He well deserves it” standing out in bold relief above it. The noose still hangs over him in history, and the legend also.

## CHAPTER XCVIII.

### *ORIGIN OF THE JINGOES.*

(1873.)

ONE Sunday afternoon, in March, 1878, a meeting was held in Hyde Park in support of Mr. Gladstone's policy on the Eastern Question. The two principal persons taking part in it were the Honourable Auberon Herbert and Mr. Bradlaugh. The chief supporters of the Conservative Government of the day were the music-hall politicians, a class of persons little distinguished for sober discernment in public affairs or for patriotic service. A wild and vain glorious ditty, calculated to excite the contempt of foreigners, was sung with ostentatious applause in their convivial halls. Its best known lines were—

"We don't want to fight,  
But by Jingo if we do,  
We have the ships, we have the men,  
And have the money too."

A certain Lieutenant Armitt, not much heard of previously in war or politics, assembled these jocund politicians in the park, and a conflict ensued. It was reported in the papers that Mr. Herbert was chased and had his clothes torn, and that Mr. Bradlaugh drew a new truncheon from his pocket, which he fortunately did not use—probably because those who knew him thought it undesirable to incite him to do it, as he was not a man to be intimidated in maintaining the right of public meeting. Afterwards a portion of the assembly set out to Harley Street, and broke Mr. Gladstone's windows. The poet of the music-hall patriots received a Royal letter of approval of

his production, and those vinous politicians thought themselves called upon to give some public proof of their quality. It was not advisable that truncheons should be produced at a Sunday meeting by any party. As I was an advocate of the freer use of Sunday than was customary, I thought fighting on that day would compromise the claim, and that a belligerent meeting was better held on the Saturday, since the Sunday succeeding would give the humbler combatants time to recover before their workshop duties on Monday commenced. I, therefore, said the leaders of the Jingoes were better left to their own devices on church day. I entitled my letter to the *Daily News* "The Jingoes in the Park." This was the origin of the term "Jingoes," and was the first time it was used. The public reading it in the *Daily News* on the morning of March 13, 1878, the term was taken up generally, and it was added to the nomenclature of political literature. We had then a Music Hall majority in the House of Commons, and the patriotism of the singing saloons and the spread-eagleism of Lord Cranbrook, would produce a bad impression of England on the public opinion of Europe if no one openly expressed dissent.

Mr. Justin McCarthy, in the first edition (and probably in others) of his "History of Our Own Times," said "The origin of the term was ascribed to Mr. Holyoake." The editor of the *World* subsequently remarked, "It is a common belief that the term Jingo was first applied to a certain political party by Mr. G. J. Holyoake," to whom I answered (November 27, 1878) that it was so, as I had certainly intended to mark, by a convenient name, a new species of patriots who, often found in the germ state in their native haunts, had propagated in the bibulous atmosphere of a Tory Government, had begun to infest public meetings, and were unrecognised and unclassified. Their characteristic was a war-urging pretentiousness which discredited the silent, resolute, self-defensiveness of the British people. Sir Hardinge Giffard, the Solicitor-General of the day, in a speech at Salford, reported in the *Standard*, deprecated the application of the term to the Conservative Government, saying the "phrase was presented to the Liberal party" by Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, who, he (the speaker) thought, "might claim better than the accredited leader in the House to be the leader of the Liberal party in the country, as he found

brains for them." Of course he did not mean this. His object was to disparage his political antagonists in Parliament. A term to obtain currency must be brief, relevant to the time, and easily spoken. The qualities I did not invent. I had no merit save that of discerning them in the new political pretensions of the Music Hall party and their Jingo song.

The *Irish World* (March 30, 1878), of New York, gave a cartoon, in which the British Lion, with a knife and pistol in his belt, a revolver in one hand, and a waving Union Jack in the other, is calling upon the Jingoes in the park to follow him to demolish Mr. Gladstone's house. The scene had a special application in the New York paper, as a Jingo riot had broken out in Toronto. The central figure in the cartoon is the first of the Jingoes, upon whom volumes have since been written.

In controversy which arose on this subject, Mr. G. J. Harney cited St. Gingoulph as the origin of the term Jingo who may be taken as a patron saint. The *World* newspaper is in favour of an origin more German—that of the *Salisburia* or *gingko-tree* (mentioned by Mr. A. R. Wallace in the *Fortnightly Review*, 1878)—"a pine with a foliage like that of a gigantic maidenhair fern." The *World* says the Jingo tree received the name of *Salisburia* from Smith so long ago as 1796. If this be true, it had not outgrown its name in 1878. The Ranger might plant a *Salisburia* in the Park. Then we should have a Jingo tree as well as a "Reformers' tree." There is an abuse of the term when applied to politicians of intelligence and sober thought who are for the consolidation of the empire or for imperial policy. The Jingoes are mainly the *habitues* of the turf, the tap-room, and the low music halls, whose inspiration is beer, whose politics are swagger, and whose policy is insult to foreign nations.

## CHAPTER XCIX.

### *STORY OF THE ANTI-CORN LAW LEAGUE.*

(1839-1874.)

IN 1874, the projectors of "Johnson's American Cyclopædia" desired to include in it an article on the Anti-Corn Law League. It came to pass that, on the advice of Mr. Smalley, I was asked to write it. I remember well that when I delivered it to the European agent of the "Cyclopædia," a poet known as "Hans Breitman," he asked me what he should pay me. I had not thought of that, thinking there was a tariff already fixed which I should be paid per column, as is usual in these cases. Three pounds seemed to me a probable sum. I answered: "As I had to go to Basingstoke to see Mr. Paulton, I would add £1 on that account," and named £4. Producing a handful of sovereigns, Mr. Leland said, "You had better take seven." As I had expended time in research and correspondence upon the paper, and as there was nothing in my circumstances that made £7 inconvenient to me, I took it. The incident is still in my memory, as that form of payment was new to me. It was freedom of payment consistently applied to an article on freedom of trade.

Before writing it I asked Mr. Leland if he had any suggestions to make as to the character of the article. His reply was sensible and characteristic. He answered: "It would be useless. I would say, however, that I find a great disposition (and it is very creditable) among English writers for American publications to write so as to please Americans. It is a very hazardous experiment, and frequently fails." I was not likely to run this risk. My wilfulness in writing would preserve me from it. My policy is simply to tell the reader the truth

relevant to the subject, so far as I know it, without implying that the reader is a fool if he takes a different view, for I never forget that the readers who differ from me may be better informed than myself. No reader is displeased who is treated with candour and respect.

In the days of the *Morning Star* there appeared a short letter from Mr. Bright to a correspondent in which the case of Free Trade was stated with a completeness I had never seen equalled. I wrote to Mr. Bright to ask if it remained in his mind, and if there were any special sources of information I ought to consult—provided “his leisure, or health, or opportunity, or wishfulness permitted him to answer.” He kindly replied as follows:—

“ROCHDALE, Sept. 23, 1874.

“DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,—I am glad you are to write the article on the League, but I do not know how I can help you. The doings of the League are written in detail in the ‘Anti-Bread-Tax Circular’ and in the League newspaper, and some copies of these exist. From them, by research and study, everything connected with the movement may be learned.

“To write much is to me burdensome, and my correspondence, diminished as it is, is still burdensome; so I cannot sit down to tell you anything, and indeed I do not feel as if I had anything special to tell you. If I were in London, and could spend an evening with you, perhaps something might be said that would assist you. My friend Mr. Paulton is a great authority on League matters. He was its private and confidential secretary, and a great personal friend of Mr. Cobden and myself. He is living at Boughton Hall, near Woking; but he is in poor health, and I doubt if he would be able to enter into the matter at all or not.

“I do not remember anything about the letter in the *Star* to which you refer.

“A good article on the League might do great good in America, and I hope you will be able to write it so as to please yourself. I feel sure you will do justice to your subject.

“If there is any special point on which you think I can give you an opinion, I shall be glad to hear from you again.—Yours very truly,

“JOHN BRIGHT.

“Geo. J. Holyoake, Esq., 22, Essex Street, London”

Mr. Thomas Thomasson, of Bolton, who better understood the political economy of trade than any other manufacturer of those days, and whom both Cobden and Bright consulted when they were young men, sent me, with his usual friendliness, information respecting all the works accessible of Prentice, Dunckley, and others, as did Mr. W. E. A. Axon also. Afterwards I had the pleasure of visiting Mr. Paulton, of Boughton Hall. He reminded me of Charles Reece Pemberton. Still retaining the contagious enthusiasm of his youth, he might be described as having an electric animation of manner. One thing he said I remember, because it was similar in sentiment to one Francis Place once expressed to me:—"I do not do what I can for men because I have hope of men as they are, but because of what they may be." It surprised me that two men so dissimilar as Place, the solid-minded, and Paulton, the mercurial, should have the same despair of the present and confidence in the future. Another remark Mr. Paulton made has been made elsewhere, and must occur to many observers and actors in agitations—namely, "There would be no rogues were there no fools."

I was a member of the League, and my impressions of its career, principles, and orators may, therefore, have interest for readers of this generation. The notes Mr. Bright made on my narrative when shown to him I indicate in brackets in this and the next chapter.

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Anti-Corn Law League was a name taken by a famous association of Manchester manufacturers [and others], founded in 1839, for abolishing all fiscal imposts on corn. The first Manchester election of members of Parliament, which took place in 1832, carried Free Trade candidates, that electoral issue being then raised for the first time in England. In 1834, the first meeting of the Manchester merchants was called to consider the question of Corn Law repeal. In 1836, a miscellaneous Anti-Corn Law Society was formed in London which included twenty-two members of Parliament. Among the names of the adherents were those of George Grote, the historian ; Joseph Hume, the economist ; Sir William Molesworth, editor of the works of Hobbes ; John Arthur Roebuck,

historian of the Whigs ; Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn Law rhymer ; W. H. Ashurst, a leading promoter of the Penny Postage System ; Francis Place, the chief of working-class agitators [Place was not a working man in the common use of the term. He was a tailor at Charing Cross in good circumstances and of gentlemanly education.—J. B.] ; and William Weir, subsequently editor of the *Daily News* ; Gen. Perronet Thompson, the great exponent of Free Trade. But no intellect, however eminent and various in its force, could avail against monopoly without money and popular opinion ; and of these forces the precursor was W. A. Paulton, a young surgeon of bright, incessant enthusiasm, with a genius for agitation.

In 1838, a Dr. Birnie had announced at the theatre, Bolton, Lancashire, a "Lecture on the Corn Laws." The doctor was laden with notes, in which he got so entangled that he could not tell what he had to say. Mr. Thomas Thomasson, afterwards the executor of Cobden, a man of striking energy of character and commercial sagacity, being among the auditors, said to Paulton, who was near him, "You can speak ; go down on the stage and deliver the doctor." The spontaneity and capacity which Paulton showed on that occasion led to his being invited to lecture himself, and ultimately he delivered three hundred lectures against the Corn Laws throughout Great Britain. He became the private and confidential secretary of the future League, which his eloquence and thoroughness mainly instigated. At a dinner given to him at Bolton, Mr. Bright made the first public speech delivered out of his native town, Rochdale. Later in the same year Dr. Bowring, then of Free Trade repute, being entertained to dinner in Manchester, Mr. James Howie cried out, on Mr. Paulton's health being drunk, "Why could not we have a Free Trade Association ?" A week later one was formed, consisting of seven persons, of which the chief was Mr. Archibald Prentice, founder of the *Manchester Examiner*, who had himself, as early as 1828, advised the foundation of such a society. A subscription of five shillings each was adopted ; £5,000 each was wanted before Corn Law repeal was carried. Some members paid that amount, and Mr. Thomasson much more.

In 1838, Mr. Cobden first became prominent in the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for resistance to the restrictive commercial policy of the manufacturing trade of the country. In 1839, delegates from the manufacturing districts were appointed to proceed to London to press their opinions upon the Legislature. Mr. Charles Pelham Villiers, who ten years later became President of the Poor Law Board, undertook to represent the Free Trade question in the House of Commons. On February 19th, 1839, Mr. Villiers moved that certain manufacturers be heard by counsel, before the bar of the House of Commons, against the Corn Laws, as injurious to their private interests. The motion was rejected by an overwhelming majority. On March 12th following, the day on which the Anti-Corn Law League originated, Mr. Villiers again moved "that the House resolve itself into a committee of inquiry on the Corn Laws," when only 195 members could be found to vote for inquiry [I doubt whether so many voted so.—J. B.], while 342 voted against it.

Discouraged and dismayed, the partisans of inquiry, who had come up from Manchester to await the result of the motion, rushed over to Herbert's Hotel, then standing in Palace Yard, opposite the House of Parliament, to consider what could be done. It was in that crowded room that Cobden, leaping on a chair, reminded the delegates of the victorious effects of the Hanseatic League, which, three centuries previously, had freed the trade of Hans Towns from the imposts of German princes. "Let us," cried Cobden, "have an Anti-Corn Law League, which shall free corn and trade also." It was then and there that the League originated. Cobden proposed that a fund of £50,000 be raised, and a considerable portion of that sum was subscribed in the room. The chief Manchester commercial houses followed with subscriptions of £50 and £100 each.

The English Corn Laws, which had for their object the restriction of the trade in grain, date as far back as 1360. At that time the prohibition was against exportation. It was not until 1462 that an Act was passed prohibiting its free importation. The object of the Anti-Corn Law League of 1839 was stated by the chairman (Mr. J. B. Smith) on the occasion of Paulton's first lecture, in the Manchester Corn Exchange, "to be the same righteous object as that of the Anti-Slavery Society,

which sought to obtain for the negro the right to dispose of himself ; and the object of the League was to obtain for the people the right to dispose of their labour for as much food as could be got for it, in whatever market the exchange could be made." The Leaguers little foresaw at the time the formidable work they had undertaken, and only gradually learned themselves, as the great agitation proceeded, the principles they had to establish. What they discovered was that monopoly always had advocates ready made, who, sharing in its exclusive advantages, had reasons for being enthusiastic in its defence. Any tradesman would profit could he exclude from the market rival articles of those in which he dealt. His profits would increase at the expense of the purchaser. The monopolist dealer considers this protection, but the public, who are customers of the market, find it to be but protection on one side—the protection of the seller, while he has his hands in the pocket of the buyer. What the public want is free purchase in a free market, the power to procure what they want from whomsoever has it to offer. Free buying—that is protection to the customer. The doctrine of the purchaser is as much food as a man can buy, for as much wages as a man can earn, for as much work as a man can do ; and is the natural and ought to be inalienable birthright of every man who has the strength to labour and the will to work.

In other things besides corn, protection was always on the side of the seller, until the Anti-Corn Law League freed all English industry from restrictive imposts. These "Free Traders," as the Leaguers were styled, were opposed by an organised party, who took the title "Protectionist," and maintained—

(1) That Protection was necessary to keep certain lands in cultivation ; (2) that it was desirable to cultivate as much land as possible, in order to improve the country ; (3) that if improvement by that means were to cease, there must be dependence on the foreigner for a large portion of the food of the people : (4) that such dependence would be fraught with immense danger. In the event of war, supplies might be stopped, for the ports might be blockaded, the result being famine, disease, and civil war. (5) That the advantage gained by Protection enabled landed proprietors and their tenants to

encourage manufactures and trade ; so much so that, were the Corn Laws abolished, half the country shopkeepers would be ruined. That would be followed by the stoppage of many mills and factories ; large numbers of the working classes would be thrown idle, disturbances would ensue, capital would be withdrawn, and no one would venture to say what would be the final consequences.

By this formidable enumeration, it was made to appear that the end of England was certainly at hand if the corn monopoly was disturbed. No country in the world can hope to put on record a more appalling set of consequences if protection is menaced. In England they exercised a commanding influence, even over the working people, who were induced to believe that it was for their interest that bread was made dear. The learned as well as the ignorant, the aristocracy as well as the small shopkeeper, were under the same uninstructed terror. Even Sir James Graham declared in Parliament, when a fixed duty on corn instead of a fluctuating one was proposed by Lord John Russell, that "it would not be the destruction of one particular class in the State alone, but of the State itself." Sir Robert Peel at first met the effort of the League by a sliding scale, varying with the price of wheat. This was a thoroughly English device, worthy of the genius of a people who never precipitate themselves even into the truth. Had Moses been an English premier, instead of making the Commandments absolute he would have proclaimed a sliding scale of violation.

## CHAPTER C.

### *THE ORATORS OF THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE.*

(1839-1874.)

THE Anti-Corn-Law League instructed the people, its organisation enabled the people to express their opinion, but it was the platform orators who inspired the opinion. The struggle of the League lasted seven years, and cost half a million of money. In the fourth year of its activity, Mr. Paulton stated that the League employed upward of 300 persons in making up electoral packets of tracts, and 500 other persons in distributing them among the constituencies. In England and Scotland alone they distributed to electors 5,000,000 tracts and stamped publications, while to non-electors of the working class they distributed 3,600,000 publications. In addition, the League had stitched up in monthly magazines and other periodicals 426,000 tracts. The entire number of tracts and stamped publications issued by the League in the single year 1843, was 9,026,000, weighing upwards of 100 tons.

Such were the business features of this famous association. But its success came from its inspiration, and its inspiration, as I have said, came from its remarkable leaders. Ebenezer Elliott wrote fiery rhymes for it; Gen. Thompson wrote its Catechism; George Wilson, the chairman of the League, admittedly the most efficient chairman in England during his day [organised its popular action]; James Acland, a vigorous speaker, acquainted with the people, was a sort of outrider to the League, going into market towns on market days on a white horse, perhaps as a pacific emblem, but partly as a means of drawing attention. He took the fighting among the belligerent

farmers, so that when Bright and Cobden came [here Mr. Bright changed the order of names and put Cobden first] the strength of the enemy was known, and the local stock of turbulence being expended, the peripatetic orators obtained a hearing. Cobden mainly addressed himself to the villagers. He foresaw the great jam industry, and predicted to mothers cheap sugar and abundant fruit preserves. Oxfordshire cottagers tell to this day of the happy tidings their mothers brought home after listening to the League orators in the Market Place. Bright dealt more with the landlords and farmers, into whose cold understanding he poured the hot shot of League logic.

The League was the first body of agitators who introduced method into public meetings. In the hour of argument in the Covent Garden Theatre, Mr. Villiers' mastery of the question was heard, his high character lending influence to the cause. Mr. Milner Gibson, another Parliamentary voice, had a graceful and cogent eloquence which always commanded attention. Mr. W. J. Fox, a Unitarian minister, and subsequently M.P. for Oldham, surpassed all the orators of the League of that day in brilliance of speech. Shorter and more rotund than Charles James Fox, he, notwithstanding, produced effects of rhetoric transcending those of his great namesake. The term "brilliant" does not entirely describe them. You no more thought of his appearance while he was speaking than you did of Thiers's insignificant stature. His low, clear, lute-like voice penetrated over the pit and gallery of Covent Garden Theatre. "You saw in the papers yesterday," he would begin, "the case of a poacher who was seized, indignantly treated, summarily tried, and sentenced to a serious term of degrading imprisonment. If this," he exclaimed, "be the rightful treatment of the poor man who steals the rich man's bird, what ought to be done to the rich man who steals the poor man's bread?" In words to this effect he spoke. Men remember that argument to this day. It constituted the first words of his speech. He began with it. No first words of any speech in my time ever produced the same effect upon an audience.

The public and the press were allured by the great names of Cobden and Bright. Mr. Cobden, "the palefaced manufacturer," whom the landowners believed, and the farmers were

persuaded to believe, was a Manchester enemy of agriculture, and a paid emissary of the Socialist insurgents of the Continent, was himself the son of a Sussex farmer, whose ambition was to die one of that class, and did so die, seeking and accepting no other distinction than that which his genius cast around his name. He was the logician of the League. As a master of lucid statement on the platform or in Parliament, he left no equal at his death. When he had made a statement, he looked at it and around it, as though he saw it in the air before him. What was deficient he supplied, what was redundant he withdrew, by putting the question in another way, in which he omitted any mischievous word, or qualified any phrase he had used which might mislead, so that he could not be misunderstood by accident, nor his meaning perverted by design. This contributed to give the League great ascendancy, since all its adherents could quote without fear of contradiction what he said, and his speeches of one day became the authority of the next.

Mr. Bright's was a grander, more imposing and impassioned order of eloquence. Cobden presented the facts. Bright put fire into them. With the finest voice of any European orator, he displayed a measured vehemence on the platform which gave the impression of unknown power. He was the Vulcan of the movement ; he forged at red heat, and hurled the burning bolts which finally set Protection on fire.

Finally there came the collection maker of the League, R. R. R. Moore, with a voice that fell on a meeting like the bursting of a reservoir. It was not what he said, so much as the sound he made, that produced the effect. The maddest clamour was not hushed—it was overwhelmed by the new roar, which was always reserved to the end of the meeting. His function was to appeal for subscriptions, and he exactly answered that end, for when his astounding voice fell upon the meeting no one seemed to have the power of going away. I do but describe my impressions ; but here Mr. Bright remarks : [“His speeches were often logical and very good. The description of his voice is greatly exaggerated. He worked hard and was of great service to the League.—J. B.”]

These were the great propagandists of Free Trade Economy, who made conquest of the Premier, Sir Robert Peel, who won for himself an imperishable name, by repealing in 1846 the

Corn Laws ; thus "giving the people bread no longer leavened," as he proudly said, "by a sense of injustice." Never was there such a wreck of political reputations as took place within a few years of the abolition of Protection in Corn. Nothing happened which had been predicted by the prognosticators of disaster. Poor lands were more cultivated than before ; no stoppage of imports by war occurred ; manufacturers and shopkeepers thrived beyond their forefathers' dreams of prosperity ; instead of rents of land falling, the aristocracy, the chief owners of it, grew rich while they slept—as they do still ; and farmers found "ruin" a very pleasant thing to them. The working classes became better instead of worse employed, and their wages in some places excite the jealousy of curates, while the agricultural labourers are at last able to insist upon improved provision for themselves. A stimulus, inconceivable before, was given to trade ; fluctuations in the price of corn decreased ; apprehensions of insufficient harvests no longer excited dread, and the British race became physically one-half larger in bulk and one-half heavier in weight than in the days before Cobden and Bright arose. The victory of the Anti-Corn-Law League was the greatest ever won by reason in the history of human agitations. Neither in piety, nor morals, nor trade are men for trusting one another. Everybody is for protecting his neighbour from benefiting himself. Nobody is for leaving freedom free. The principle of progress in commerce and social life is not to limit liberty, but to limit injury. It was the establishment of this principle in trade that caused this League to be regarded as one of the historic forces of British civilisation.

Mr. Cobden told me one night at the House of Commons that, despite all the expenditure in public instruction, "the League would not have carried the repeal of the Corn Laws when they did, had it not been for the Irish famine and the circumstance that we had a Minister who thought more of the lives of the people than his own continuance in power."

George Wilson was a great chairman. In a short, strong speech he explained the position of the question (to be considered) out of doors, and the case to be submitted to the meeting. But in conducting the meetings he was despotic. There was no code for their regulation then in England nor now, and despotism alone brought them to an end.

During a thousand years the theory of public meetings in England has not been revised. In Saxon times, we are told, the wise men of the commune assembled under a tree and took counsel together. If public meetings were limited to "wise men" in these days they would seldom be crowded. Saxon public meetings were not so numerous but that every one could give his opinion who had an opinion to give, and the theory of the Saxon public meeting was that every one present had a right to be heard. Upon this theory meetings to-day are held when they amount to ten thousand persons, or, as at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, when Mr. Gladstone was there, to thirty thousand. In the days of Thomas Attwood a Newhall Hill meeting in Birmingham was held, when Daniel O'Connell spoke, at which two hundred thousand persons were present. Had each person "stood upon his right to be heard," the meeting would have lasted a year. Whenever disorder is intended, persons are put forward to "demand" a hearing. The friends of the impossible "right" yell for it, and the friends of order yell against it. The chairman all the while is as helpless as a windmill. When Mr. Jesse Collings, M.P., was Mayor of Birmingham, he was insulted by Tories for two hours. They stopped the meeting over which he presided. They had made a large drawing of the head of an ass, and suspended it from the gallery in front of Mr. Collings, loudly calling his attention to it. At last he ordered the police to remove the asinine rioters, who indicted him for assault, which a Tory magistrate (Mr. Kynersley) sustained. At Brighton, during the Tory Government of Mr. Disraeli, no Liberal meeting could be held for five years, because the Liberals were unwilling to physically fight the Tories who were ready with a contingent of ruffians for that kind of disturbance. In Rochdale, when Mr. T. B. Potter was first elected, men were sent into the town, armed with sticks, to break up the meeting. I therefore advised that thick-headed Liberals should be put in the front, and they proved to be the most valuable members of the party of order, since they could best resist the arguments of insurgent sticks. Patriots of cranial tenuity were of no use.

It is singular and absurd that the right of public meeting should be a boasted English institution, at which no chairman can lawfully preserve order, and the proceedings can only be

regulated by riot, or by the *clôture* of clamour, as in the House of Commons. The organisation of democracy is a long way off, and Liberalism is deliberate enough to reassure the most alarmed and apprehensive Toryism in the kingdom not to have established, one hundred years ago, the right of order at public meetings, and promulgated a code of procedure suitable to the conditions of modern days. The resolutions to be proposed should be described by the Chair. They should be few, the speakers few, and the time of each allotted and time for amendments provided and limited, and the authority of the Chair as to order should be made legal.\*

\* In this and the previous chapter I have used annotations by Mr. Bright. He then and always deprecated any words of praise applied to himself, but I did not wholly leave them out on that account.

## CHAPTER CI.

### *CAREER OF A BOHEMIAN ARTIST.*

(1847-1877.)

ABOUT 1847, two young men came to London from Oxford, not so much to seek their fortunes as to find occupation more genial than that they followed. Still they both had the instinct of distinction in them. One was George Hooper, who afterwards wrote, in the *Reasoner*, some articles under the signature of "Eugene." He brought some knowledge of Latin to town, and continued to read the classics in his leisure, which was much to his credit. I spoke of him to Mr. Thornton Hunt, and when the *Leader* was started he was assigned a place upon it. He pursued journalism and authorship, and made himself a name in military literature. His companion, Henry Merritt, came to reside in my house, where he continued nearly eighteen years, employing himself in picture restoration, in which he ultimately acquired skill and repute.

His life had been one of vicissitude. His social condition as a youth in Oxford was below hope, save by self-help. He had been in a charity school, an errand boy about the colleges, had filled various humble and precarious situations. In London he had been a Bohemian with art-love in his mind, honesty in his heart, and nothing in his pocket; with no patrons save a watchmaker in a passage off Drury Lane and a Jew coffee-house keeper in the Strand, both "good fellows" in their way.

When about Graves's shop (the printseller's) in Oxford, he had become acquainted with Mr. Delamotte, who, seeing the youth's taste, kindly gave him encouragement; and what was more valuable, he gave him instruction in art, for which

Merritt was grateful all his days. He dedicated his first book, "Dirt and Pictures Separated," thus :—

To  
WILLIAM ALFRED DELAMOTTE, Esq.,  
Who, when I was a boy—a stranger,  
Unknown to him even by name,  
Carefully and gratuitously instructed me  
In the rudiments of art,  
I inscribe this little Volume  
With long-cherished feelings of respect.\*

As he resided with me, I had opportunities of introducing him to my friends, and at times he shared invitations with me. He occupied two rooms in my house (one being his studio), and had the use of the dining-room. He paid seven or eight shillings then. Sometimes he was in arrears several pounds, as I see from his account-book of that time. When money came to hand he paid up arrears, for he was as honest in his dealings as in his work.

When I removed to a lodge near Regent's Park, Merritt went with me by his own desire. There he worked for two years upon the oldest picture in England, Richard II., brought there from the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, and entrusted to him by Dean Stanley, Mr. Richmond the elder superintending its restoration. Mr. Dennison, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and other eminent persons, oft came to witness the progress of the work. It was a delight to me to see this picture day by day, and see the king revealed whose face no eye had seen for 150 years. In the last century the House of Commons appointed one Captain Broome to brighten up the portrait, who knew no more of restoration than a house painter. He put upon the panel a new portrait in which the king was lost, and a staring, treacle-faced young man appeared in his place, with a sceptre as short and stumpy as a policeman's staff. Underneath Broome's paint was found the true presentation of the pensive, timorous king whom Shakespeare drew,

\* Merritt never heard of his friend more. Yet all the while he was pursuing his art in Brighton and executed some works for Joseph Ellis, who told me he had much regard for Delamotte.

holding a graceful sceptre in his hand. Broome had forgotten that the tails of the king's ermine pointed down, and had painted them up. The reader may see the real Richard II. in the Jerusalem Chamber now.

As remarkable in its way is the ponderous panel on which the life-sized king was painted. It is more than an inch thick, and is composed of three planks of oak, not only as sound as when they were sawn five hundred years ago, but as unwarped as a plane of steel. Mr. Hans Holbein, who believed himself a descendant of his famous namesake, could not by a microscope discover the suture where the clever carpenter who made it had joined the panel.

At the Lodge the ground rent exceeded £23, and house charges were considerable. Merritt occupied four rooms; the two chief having folding doors, made him a spacious studio. He took up the whole time of a servant, and the Lodge grounds were yielded to him for recreation. Here he paid £1 a week. Like most persons born and reared in indigence, he was alarmed at any new expense, even when he could well bear it. He was distressed and apprehensive even at this charge, and never paid more to the end of his tenancy. But I had other interest than profit in continuing it. It was partly friendship—partly liking, and partly the love of seeing pictures, curious or choice, about my rooms—a pleasure otherwise unattainable by me. It was diverting in another way to see, in the earlier years, the straits of impecuniousness in artist life. Well I remember when at Woburn Buildings, Mr. Parrington, a friend of mine, called with a picture for Merritt to test or restore. It happened he had no solvent of any kind by him, by which he could clean the surface or remove encrustations of varnish. Then Mrs. Holyoake secretly sent out for what he wanted, so that the visitor might not be aware of its scarcity; for a patron with a valuable picture would be loathe to leave it if he suspected the need of the artist might lead him to pledge it. Then when the solvents came it was found that there was no linen with which to apply or absorb them at the critical moment, when the household collection had to be drawn upon, and sent into the studio—as from a store-room where he was supposed to keep his rolls of old soft linen.

Besides the interest of these episodes, Merritt was ordinarily

excellent company to talk to, or contradict. As Hartley Coleridge said of one of his friends :—

“ Fine wit he had—and knew not it was wit  
And native thoughts before he dreamed of thinking ;  
Odd sayings, too, for each occasion fit,  
To oldest sights the newest fancies linking.

What I most honoured my friend for was his honesty in art. By falsifying pictures, making new ones look old, and finding the signature of the master under the paint where it had never been put, inventing for a picture a pedigree and a character, he might have made money as others did, but he preferred poverty to deceit. After many years he had his reward. He could be trusted. He was known to know his art ; his word could be believed, and his opinion was worth money. Connoisseurs so eminent as Mr. Gladstone in Merritt's later years consulted him.

My brother William, Curator of the Art Schools of the Royal Academy, was useful to Merritt, as he was to others in his way ; but Merritt could not paint, and therefore he could be trusted to restore. He had colour in his blood. He had the patience of Gerard Dow (whom Merritt was fond of citing), who was said to spend days in painting a broom. I have seen Merritt spend days over a few inches of injured canvas, until, by careful stippling, he matched the colours, and replaced the lost tints, so that no ordinary eye could tell where the effacing fingers of neglect or decay had wrought mischief. No one who could paint could be depended upon to take this trouble, when he could in an hour paint in the defective parts ; whether such a one could do it better or worse, or as well, he would not represent the genius of the master nor restore *his* work.

When we lived at No. 1, Woburn Buildings, a window overlooked the grounds of Charles Dickens, who resided then at Tavistock Place, made Merritt's working-room the best room, because it looked on trees. On Sundays Dickens would have a friend or two in the garden, and a tray of bottled stout, “churchwardens,” and tobacco would be brought from the house. We were told that this was Dickens's protest against the doleful way of keeping Sunday then thought becoming. Tavistock House was the one formerly occupied by “Perry of the

*Morning Chronicle*," as he used to be described, but in my time it was divided into two houses. One was occupied by Frank Stone the elder, who died there—a very genial person to know. The other was occupied by Sidney Milnes Hawkes, afterwards by Mr. James Stansfield. Mazzini was frequently there in those times. One morning, when Dickens resided there, a person purporting to be Mazzini called, and solicited aid. Dickens sent down a servant, who presented a sovereign on a silver tray. The visitor took the gift with thanks. When this came to be known to Mazzini's friends they were filled with amazement at Dickens's thoughtlessness, to say the least. How could he imagine that a gentleman whom he had met in society, as a man of reputation for honour and self-respect, would come to his door soliciting alms, like an adventurer or an impostor? And, if he believed the applicant to be Mazzini, some inquiry, some commiseration and identification was necessary to make sure that one so eminent was suddenly in distress so abject. Mazzini had a hundred friends who would have aided him before he need have been a suppliant at Dickens's door.

Though he hardly knew it, Merritt had the ambition of authorship in him, but he cost me infinite trouble to make him believe it. He began by writing for me in the *Reasoner* under the signature of "Christopher." Sometimes I suggested the subjects, and revised what he wrote. At length I urged him to write about his own profession, as nothing distinctive or readable existed upon it. At last he wrote some chapters on the Art of Restoration. At that time Mr. Hans Holbein, then stationmaster at Euston, was frequently at my house. His passion was to collect all the engravings of Holbein he could afford to purchase. He induced Merritt to call his little treatise "Dirt and Pictures Separated"—a purely technical title which could interest nobody but connoisseurs. I added the line "in the Works of the Old Masters" to render the title more human. At that time Merritt was not apt with his pen, but there was originality and fervour in him which showed he had literary taste. He had read no books save odd volumes of the letters of Pope, Defoe, or an old dramatist or two, which he had picked up on second-hand bookstalls. He had had no education save the Charity School sort—Church Catechism chiefly, which leaves a youth helpless and

abject in the battle of life. But he had the education of the streets—an excellent school for those who have sense enough to learn in it. He knew that an acquaintance of mine who made a name as a tragedian had learned grammar from a book I had written, which he had read when he resided in the house of my sister Caroline. I had put on the title-page of the book the words :—"No department of knowledge is like grammar. A person may conceal his ignorance of any other art ; but every time he speaks he publishes his ignorance of this. There can be no greater imputation on the intelligence of any man than that he should talk from the cradle to the tomb, and never talk well."

These words incited Merritt, who had the instinct of a simple and manly style in him. Like every person of taste, he was dissatisfied with his first efforts, not only dissatisfied but dismayed and despairing, and threw his chapters on Restoration six or seven times into the fire, where they would have perished had not my wife rescued them until a more hopeful mood came to him. Again and again they were enlarged and improved, and again thrown on the fire. To encourage him, I induced the editor of the *Leader* newspaper, by my accounts of their intrinsic excellence, to publish them in the "Portfolio" of that journal, where the chief chapters first appeared.

To this end I invented reasons to prove their insertion would be relevant, and wrote the introduction to the chapters in the *Leader*, and also a handbill about them, which was sent out to artisan readers in all the towns where I was in the habit of speaking. What I said was this :—

"The interesting discussion which several times has arisen respecting the preservation of the pictures in the National Gallery renders it necessary that every man having regard to the credit of the nation in this respect should be able to form an intelligent opinion upon pictures.

"Hitherto this has not been practicable to the mass of the people, because nearly all works on the subject of painting are written from the professional point of view, and abound in technicalities unintelligible to the general reader.

"Newspaper criticisms are usually written for the initiated

alone. The editor of the *Leader*, therefore, has thought it useful to insert a series of

PAPERS ON THE PAINTINGS OF THE OLD MASTERS.

which are written in popular language, and by explaining the artistic processes employed in creating a great painting, and in restoring it when unhappily damaged by accident, time, or neglect, shall enable the general reader to understand pictures and learn to appreciate them, and take part in the discussions which relate to them.

"A great painter sheds renown on his country, and refinement on all people who have the good fortune to gaze on his work. Taste for the fine arts is a proof of the civilisation of a nation. English artisans would not be behind those of any on the Continent, if knowledge of the right kind was submitted to them. The names of poets and philosophers are become household words in our land—why should not the painters become equal favourites? They would if equally well known. If political economists and politicians attain popularity, surely the day of the great artists is come. Raphael sounds as well as Ricardo, Titian may stand by Torrens, the canvas of Correggio is as attractive as Cobbett's Paper against Gold."

Had the *Leader* not possessed that heroic sentimentality in favour of usefulness which practical men despise, Merritt's papers had never appeared. He was paid, as I considered, liberally, but such was his nature that he was dissatisfied, although it was the first money he received for any writing, save such limited compensation as I was able to make him for his papers in the *Reasoner*.

The name of the errand boy of Oxford appearing in the Portfolio of a famous journal, with those of George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Harriet Martineau, and George Henry Lewes, was reputation. Merritt had not the money to purchase the distinction, and could not have bought it if he had. Yet it was not until I threatened to abandon him that he gave up his purpose of writing to the office a letter of discontent at his payment. He was as difficult to befriend as Rousseau. Yet his papers in the *Leader* were the beginning of his fortune. He became known to connoisseurs who otherwise had never heard

of him. Mr. Boxall (afterwards Sir William) could then afford to know his Bohemian townsman.

The chapters would have ended with the *Leader* had I not induced him to complete them and make a little book of them, which I printed in the "Cabinet of Reason" series, although the subject was not suited thereto. The preface was wholly mine, and the table of the painters named in the work. In concert with its purpose, I added here and there in the book remarks to enlist the interest of outside readers in a subject which would strike them as being alien. The publication brought him picture clients from the provinces. The book had a new kind of genius, and the genius was all his own. It showed knowledge, devotion, and enthusiasm, qualities Merritt alone put into the book.

## CHAPTER CII.

### *THE PICTURE RESTORER FURTHER DELINEATED.*

(1847-1877.)

HENRY MERRITT had some delightful qualities, but he was the most timid, the most irritable and inconsistent of all the children of genius whom I have known. He now possessed the status the *Leader* had given him. Next opportunity occurred of introducing him to the *Empire*, set up by Mr. Livesey, the founder of Teetotalism. The editor was John Hamilton, who had the passion of a prophet in him, and with whom I had public discussion, and for whom I had great regard. Hamilton became editor of the *Morning Star*, and Merritt came to write on art in both papers. Through the *Star*, he contributed for a time to the *Manchester Examiner*, and he went to Manchester on the occasion of an exhibition of pictures in that city. Then I was able to give him an introduction to Mr. Stephen Pettitt of Merchants' Hotel, where he made friends and had pleasant days. It was a pleasure to me to be useful to him.

An intimate friend of mine on the staff of the *Standard*, Mr. Percy Greg, was a constant visitor at my house, and I enlisted his influence to obtain the appointment of Merritt as its art critic. When he came home in Gallery days he was sometimes unable to write out his notes in time for the *Standard* the same night. Then it fell to me to write them out for him, which involved many hours of close work. Sometimes this occurred two or three times in a week. For no week, even when I spent the day at the Gallery, did I receive more than £1 for work for which he received £6. Nor should I have taken what I did had not this

work prevented me from doing my own. He would have been as ready to help me in like case.

When, in a season of illness, he was unable to attend the Galleries, he would ask me to go and make notes for him. Devoid of his critical knowledge of pictures, long familiarity with them enabled me to describe their features and the story the artist had told by his pencil. Merritt found from the art notices in other newspapers, which he subsequently perused, that my reports were to be trusted. He knew the kind of work produced by each artist who habitually exhibited. His notices sent to the *Standard*, written upon my report, were confined to descriptions of the subjects and the general characteristics of the painters, reserving technical criticisms until he was able to run down to the Galleries and see for himself. On the occasions when I went for him some droll experience befell me, such as recalled Boswell in a forgotten passage, preserved by Hazlitt in his "Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft." The comedian, who knew Boswell, records in his diary that one morning Boswell, calling on Johnson, found him writing a letter for a Mr. Lowe. On Lowe leaving, Boswell followed him, and with insinuating professions began : "How do you do, Mr. Lowe? I hope you are very well, Mr. Lowe. Pardon my freedom, Mr. Lowe, but I think I saw my dear friend Dr. Johnson writing a letter for you." "Yes, sir." "I hope you will not think me rude, but if it would not be too great a favour you would infinitely oblige me if you would just let me have a sight of it. Everything from that hand is so inestimable." "It is on my own private affairs." "I would not pry into any person's affairs, my dear Mr. Lowe, by any means. I am sure you would not accuse me of such a thing, only if it were no particular secret." "Sir, you are welcome to read the letter." I thank you, my dear Mr. Lowe ; you are very obliging. I take it exceedingly kind " (having read it). "It is nothing, I believe, Mr. Lowe, that you would be ashamed of." "Certainly not !" "Why, then, my dear sir, if you would do me another favour, you would make the obligation eternal. If you would but step to Peele's coffee-house with me, and just suffer me to take a copy of it, I would do anything in my power to oblige you." "I was overcome," said Lowe, "by this sudden familiarity and condescension, accompanied with bows and

grimaces. I had no power to refuse ; we went to the coffee-house, my letter was presently transcribed, and as soon as he had put his document in his pocket, Mr. Boswell walked away as erect and as proud as he was half an hour before suppliant, and I ever afterwards was unnoticed." Lowe added that he was left to pay for the coffee he had ordered to give Boswell opportunity of copying his letter.

A countryman of Boswell's, one of the habitual critics of the Galleries, knew me well, and would come to me in the most desultory way, with cordial greetings and incidental inquiries as to "what paper I wrote for," "why was I there," and "whom did I represent." I then wrote for three papers, but not upon art subjects. "Did I write art notices for them ?" he would inquire. "Merritt writes for the *Standard*, does he not ? Is he here ?" Beguiled by cordial familiarity, I incautiously said "my friend was unwell, and I was looking round for him." Immediately he mentioned in the paper for which he wrote—the *Reader*—that Mr. Merritt's criticisms in the *Standard* were done by another hand. This would have given great pain to Merritt, whom my questioner knew and for whom he always expressed the greatest regard. Had the treacherous information come under the eyes of the *Standard*, it might have cost my friend his appointment. When the inquisitive critic next put his familiar question to me, I said "his solicitude was very interesting, but I observed he never prefaced his inquiries by informing me what he was doing and for what paper he was writing." His curiosity there and then ceased. I suspected him of seeking Merritt's place. Of course I kept the incident from Merritt, and kept the *Reader* out of his sight.

Mr. Merritt remained art critic of the *Standard* until the time of his death. His criticisms were written on a theory we had often discussed ; it was that of subordinating merely technical criticism, giving mainly an animated description of the character of the pictures and design of the painter, with his characteristics as an artist. By limiting technical criticism to such points as were necessary for the connoisseur and picture buyer, and describing in what respect the pictures were additions to the scenic glory of art, his notices were always, and are still, readable, and they sent more persons to

the Galleries to see the pictures for themselves than any other art criticisms of his time. Art critics mostly wrote not to interest the public in art, but to show off their skill as critics ; just as most books on education are written, not to explain difficulties to uninformed students, but to show how much the author is better informed than his rival teachers. Always distrustful of his own work, Mr. Merritt cast aside his criticisms after they appeared. I kept copies of them all, and made them up into four volumes, which he afterwards was glad to refer to and show.

"Robert Dalby and his World of Troubles," Merritt's best work, I copied out several times for him. The "Oxford Professor," which he never finished, I was to re-write for him, just so far as to show him my idea how it should be treated. In everything I did for him, I did but polish the diamond : the diamond was his, not mine. Merritt had no inside life. In description of outside life he had genius. Separate passages were perfect and inimitable. He attained a spontaneous grace which change could only mar. This needs no testimony, since Mr. Ruskin wrote to him :—

"You have given great pleasure to Carlyle by your report, and you always give much to *me* whenever you write to me. I have no other friend who says such pretty things to me, in a way that reminds me of the little courtesies of old days, when people were graceful by kind act in a letter as much as in a quadrille, and when flattery was the naughtiest of one's faults to one's friends—never carelessness."

In later years, when we were still home companions, Merritt's health became precarious. For two years his life was a daily uncertainty. The whole household was absorbed in attending upon him. Often I rose once or twice in the night, and went to his room to see if he were alive, or needed aid. After he had left me, he was again in danger, and when he became delirious I sat up all night with him. When his death occurred I wrote a solicitous letter to the editor of the *Standard* to procure the art criticship for one to whom he had left his fortune, as I was always willing to serve any one whom a friend of mine befriended.

Merritt never married until within a few weeks of his death.

Though a Bohemian in freedom and precariousness, he was Bohemian in nothing else ; yet all his life his most amusing satire had been upon the peril and subjection of marriage, and he could not bear to tell me or any one that he had married. On his death I made it known in the papers, that she whom he had married might not be exposed to incredulity, for none of his friends would have otherwise believed in his marriage. The last time I saw him, scarcely a fortnight before he died, he besought me to come to him soon, as he had many things to tell me. He said that in his will he had left small bequests of £50 each to two of my children, but he should arrange to fulfil another promise he had often made. I received a telegram from a common friend summoning me from the country, as he was in great danger. I at once returned, but he was in other hands, and no opportunity occurred to me of seeing him again. He had no idea that his days would be so short, and thought he had time to do everything he meditated. He bequeathed shortly before his death several thousand pounds which he had honourably earned, and never doubted that he should earn more for his own use.

After his death, what purported to be a "Memoir" of him appeared by persons who had not known him long, and were unacquainted with the circumstances of his life, in which it was said that "the persons with whom he lived shared the benefits of his increased earnings." Again, "It was touching to see how often he supplied one family especially who depended upon him for every comfort with the means of that enjoyment in the country or by the sea-shore, while he remained at home literally to work for them." A reference to Merritt's friend and townsman, George Hooper, was still worse. Mr. Basil Champneys, the editor of the book, vouches that these things "are done with perfect tact and graphic fidelity." I attempted to obtain some correction of these statements from the editor and the publisher, but found I had no resources to obtain it legally, and expectation of its being done from a sense of justice there was none. Besides my family, some eminent friends in London and many friends elsewhere who would see the book, knew of Merritt's long residence with me, and that these references related to me. After fourteen years there comes to me this opportunity of correcting them.

Merritt had all the irascibility of the artist, but he was honourable and truthful at heart, and would have been very wild had he lived to see these statements made in his name. All the years he resided with me we seldom went to the country or seaside but we took him with us, increasing our expenses to which for many years he was unable to contribute his share. His querulousness with our friends always embittered our days, and made us glad when the unpleasantness ended. To do him justice, he regretted this, but could not help it, and he strove to make amends in his way. I used to say to him he was like Dr. Johnson's good-natured, angry man—"he spent his time in injury and reparation." When he came to acquire means of his own he became more insupportable, and, as his income was good, I besought him to take apartments elsewhere. He wrote to me saying "I was killing him, as I had given him nineteen notices to leave my house." Were I "living upon him," it was very injudicious in me to beseech him "nineteen times" to do me the favour of going away. To mitigate the tone of my request, I used to repeat the lines of Martial—

" In all thy humours, whether grave or mellow,  
Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,  
Hast so much wit and mirth and spleen about thee,  
That there's no living with thee nor without thee."

But I could "live without him," and I had ceaseless relief when I recovered the control of my house.

He did leave at length, but my personal regard for him never changed, nor his for me. Not long before his death he wrote to my friend Major Bell, saying, "It is nearly thirty years since my friendship for Holyoake commenced, and it is not likely to terminate till death."

When a person has arrived at years of discretion (some arrive very late, I am afraid : I have not reached that period yet), he sees many things which were always palpable, but which he did not observe until experience opened his eyes. Then he sees irritating things dispassionately. Many times I have tried to analyse the complex character of my artist friend. I often say of the inhabitants of a famous town which I know well, that God has given to them more humility and more pride than He has vouchsafed to any other collection of His creatures. Merritt

was not born on the Tyne, but he had these qualities. He had an insatiable expectancy of the recognition by others of qualities he disclaimed having. Charles Lamb excelled all English humourists in the American wit of exaggeration. When, he said, Coleridge met him on his way to the India House and took him by the button to discourse to him, he, with his penknife, deftly released himself, and on returning in the evening found Coleridge still holding the button, preaching to it. No one misunderstood Lamb, who merely put a halo round a fact which he left palpable. Merritt, with less than Lamb's art and genial restraint, had the bright gift of enlargement, and misled, without meaning it, those who did not know him.

We say of some men that they are nervous, meaning all the while that they have no nerves. Merritt had none. But, in lieu of them, he had a set of organised electric filaments, which, the moment you touched him with a harmless phrase, gave you a shock. He was the first person in whom I observed supernatural sensitiveness, who, starting at the slightest reflection upon himself, would say habitually things which it exceeded mortal self-respect to tolerate. In those moods you avoided him, and forgave him because it was his nature, to which he had never taught restraint. When he became eminent he kindly undertook to teach my eldest son his art. It was a distinction to be his pupil. But, with frequent kindness, there were outbursts of imputation which imperilled manliness itself to submit to. I have seen his best physician refuse further to attend him in consequence of his porcupine episodes. Yet, being just at heart, he would, like Carlyle, speak generously of the same persons, and, if others disparaged them, would defend them with many a bright and graceful phrase. Merritt thought that no one would remember what he never meant. Had I not known what heredity and circumstances do for all of us, I should have had sharp and permanent contempt, where I had only compassion and forbearance. Pained as an honourable man is that his nature should so betray him against those whom he regards, Merritt made, when he had means, what reparation he could by gifts. These he made to persons in whom I was interested, which was his way of giving me (as he thought) pleasure. In vain I besought him not to do it. For

myself, I never had any gift from him, nor did I seek one, and he knew it. Thus in some instances he destroyed my natural authority by attracting expectation to himself, and left me a legacy of mischief which made me say on one occasion that Merritt with the best intention brought great misery on others and requited some one else. His friendship was a pleasure to me and a misfortune. Merritt had the elements of a noble character in him, and, counting the disadvantages which he surmounted and the eminence he attained in art and in literature, owing everything to his honesty and skill, he deserves a place in the annals of remarkable men. A wise ancient said, "Know thyself." Merritt did not know himself. Of all knowledge possible to him he lacked this alone.

## CHAPTER CIII.

### *ERNEST JONES, THE CHARTIST ADVOCATE.*

(1848-1867.)

I OWN I have the sympathies of Old Mortality. In my time I have perpetuated the memory of many unregarded heroes, who gave their strength, and in some cases their lives, in defence of the people who had forgotten, or who had never inquired, to whom they owed their advantages.

Ernest Charles Jones will, however, be long remembered by Chartist generations. He was the son of a Major Jones, of high connections, who had served in the wars of Wellington, and was at Waterloo. He was subsequently equerry to the Duke of Cumberland, afterwards Ernest I. of Hanover, and uncle of Queen Victoria. Major Jones's mother was an Annesley, daughter of a squire of Kent. His only son, Ernest, was born in Vienna, in January, 1819. His father having an estate in Holstein, on the border of the Black Forest, Ernest Jones passed his boyhood there, and in 1830, when eleven years old, he set out across the Black Forest, with a bundle under his arm, to "help the Poles." With a similar precarious equipment, he in after years set out to help the Chartists. He was educated at St. Michael's College in Luneburg, where only high-caste students were admitted, and where he won distinction by delivering an oration in German. In 1838, he became a regular attendant at the English Court, where he was presented by the Duke of Beaufort. He married into the aristocratic family of Gibson Atherley, of Barfield, Cumberland, the name being borne by his son Atherley Jones, now member of Parliament. We of the Chartist times all knew the gentle lady who lived in Brompton during the dreary days of her husband's frightful imprisonment.

In 1844, Ernest Jones was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple. All along he had high tastes and high prospects. Thus he was reared under circumstances which did not render it necessary that he should have any sympathy with the people. But the inspiration of poetry came to him. The influence of Byron may be seen in his verse. He had no mean capacity of song. With better fortune than befell him when he had cast his lot with Chartism, and with more leisure, he would have been a poet of mark ; but he threw fortune away. His family did not like the idea of his being a Chartist rhymer. His uncle, Holton Annesley, offered to leave him £2,000 a year if he would abandon Chartist advocacy. If not, he would leave the fortune to another—and he did. Mr. Jones must have had in him elements of a valorous integrity to refuse that splendid prospect. He knew well what he was about, and that the service of the people would not keep him in bread. They whom he served were not able to do it—they had too many needs of their own. He had declined his uncle's wealthy offer in terms of noble but disastrous pride, and the fortune he relinquished was given to his uncle's gardener. Though he had chosen penury, he retained the patrician taste natural to him, and made a point of not taking payment for his speeches and addresses. There was more pride than sense in this. Those who consumed his days in travelling and his strength in speaking could and would have made him some remuneration. Without it his home must be unprovided. Making a speech has as fair a claim to payment as writing an article. Honest oratory is as much entitled to costs as honest literature. Mr. Jones often walked from town to town without means of procuring adequate refreshment by day or accommodation by night. On some occasions an observant Chartist would buy him a pair of shoes, seeing his need of them. Ernest Jones published the *People's Paper*—the sale of which did not pay expenses. The sense of debt was a new burden to him. On one occasion when I printed for him, and he was considerably in arrears, he said, "I must go to my friend Disraeli." An hour later he returned, and handed my brother Austin three of several £5 notes. He had others in his hand. That politic Minister inspired many Chartists with hatred of the Whigs, whom he himself disliked, because they did not favour his

circuitous pretensions ; and when he found Chartist of genius having the same hatred, he would supply them with money, the better to give effect to it. I never knew any Chartist in the habit of taking money, who took it for the abandonment of his principles ; nor do I believe Disraeli ever gave it them for that purpose. Their undiscerning hatred answered Tory ends.

It was July, 1843, when Mr. Jones was sentenced to two years' solitary imprisonment, and to find two sureties of £100 each and himself £200 for three years after his release—for saying, “Only organise, and you will see the green flag floating over Downing Street ; let that be accomplished, and John Mitchell shall be brought back again to his native country, and Sir G. Grey and Lord John Russell shall be sent out to exchange places with him.” This was simply amusing, and there was no more danger of this happening than of a flock of pigeons stopping a railway train. In the same speech for which he was condemned, he gave the same advice to the meeting that I had given to the delegates to the Convention in the John Street Hall, on the night before the 10th of April, 1848.

When Jones was imprisoned, it was sought to humiliate him. The Whigs did it, but the Tories would have done the same—yet the Whigs were more bound to respect the advocates of the people. Jones was required to pick oakum. Being a gentleman, he refused to be degraded as a criminal. Politics was not a crime. In the case of Colonel Valentine Baker, the Government had just respect for a gentlemen ; but not when the gentlemen was the political advocate of the poor, though Jones was socially superior to Baker.

Mr. Jones was kept in solitary confinement on the silent system—enforced with the utmost rigour for nineteen months. He complied with all the prison regulations, excepting oakum picking. That he steadfastly refused, as he would never bend himself to voluntary degradation. To break his firmness on this point he was again and again confined in a dark cell and fed on bread and water.

When suffering from dysentery, he was put into a cell in an indescribable state from which a prisoner who died from cholera had been carried. It may be reasonably assumed that it was intended to kill him. The cholera was then raging in London, and, had Jones died, no question would have been

asked. Still the authorities never succeeded in making him pick oakum.

In the second year of his imprisonment he was so broken in health that he could no longer stand upright, and was found lying on the floor of his cell. Only then was he taken to the hospital. He was told, if he would petition for his release and abjure politics, the remainder of his sentence would be remitted. This he refused, and he was sent back to his cell. Let any one consider what those two dreary years of indignity, brutality, peril, and solitude must have been to a man like Ernest Jones—nervous, sanguine, ambitious, with his fiery spirit, fine taste, and consciousness of great powers—and restrain if he can admiration of that splendid courage and steadfastness. Unregarded, uncared for, he maintained his self-respect. Thomas Carlyle went to look at the caged Chartist through the bars of his prison, and increased, by his heartless and contemptuous remarks, public indifference to the fate of the friendless prisoner. Carlyle wrote :—"The world and its cares quite excluded for some months to come, master of his own time, and spiritual resources to, as I supposed, a really enviable extent." This shows that, like meaner men, Carlyle could write without facts, or even inquiring for them. Ernest Jones, "master of his own time," had to pick oakum, or spend his days in a dark cell. Thus his "spiritual resources" were limited. He was refused a Bible even, and had to write with his blood. His "really enviable" condition was that of knowing that his wife was ignorant whether he was dead or alive, and he was denied the knowledge what fate in the cholera season had befallen her or his children, for whom no provision existed.

In his savage imprisonment he did write poems, but it had to be done with his own blood—not from sensationalism, but from necessity, pen and ink being denied him. Undaunted, he returned on his liberation to his old advocacy of the people. Mr. Benjamin Wilson, of Salterhebble, Halifax, who knew Jones well, has given many facts not before known of his career in the "Struggles of Old Chartists."

Ernest Jones and I were associated in Chartist agitation while it lasted. I was a visitor at his fireside at Brompton. Mrs. Ernest Jones, a lady of great refinement, shared the vicissitudes of his Chartist days, which shortened her own.

Mr. Jones left London in 1859, and went to Manchester with a sad heart. Practice at the Bar had to be won. One night, after attending the court at Leeds, he was met by Mr. Moses Clayton, who found he had no home to go to. A home was found him at Dr. Skelton's, and a brief also next day. He had come to the resolution that night that he would see no morning. Afterwards better fortune came to him. He had the chance of being member for Dewsbury. He was nearly elected member for Manchester, and the reversion of the seat to him was likely when he suddenly died. His grand energy, fatigue, and exposure killed him. Had he reached Parliament, he had all the qualities which promised a great career there. Shortly before his death he spent some hours with me in my chambers in Cockspur Street, overlooking Trafalgar Square, discussing a favourite theory of his—the manner in which an actor on the stage of the world should quit it.<sup>1</sup>

In every workshop in Great Britain, in mine and mill, and in other lands where his name was familiar, there was sadness when his death was known. His friend in many a conflict, George Julian Harney, sent from America to the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* an impassioned account of the effect of the news on him as he read it in a telegram in Boston.

Mr. Jones had a strong musical voice, energy and fire, and a more classic style of expression than any of his compeers in agitation. When he spoke at the grave of Benjamin Rushton of Ovenden, he began :—"We meet to-day at a burial and a birth—the burial of a noble patriot is the resurrection of a glorious principle. The foundation stones of liberty are the graves of the just ; the lives of the departed are the landmarks of the living ; the memories of the past are the beacons of the future."

Despite his popular sympathies and generous sacrifices for the people, the patrician distrust of them, now and then, broke out, as when he wrote :—

" Ill fare the men who, flushed with sudden power,  
Would uproot centuries in a single hour.

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<sup>1</sup> After his death an " Ernest Jones Fund " was proposed. Lord Armstrong, then Sir William, sent two guineas to the *Punch* office, which was sent to me for the Fund.

Gaze on those crowds—is theirs the force that saves ?  
 What were they yesterday ?—a horde of slaves !  
 What are they now but slaves without their chains ?  
 The badge is cancelled, but the man remains.”

There is some truth in these lines. The abatements I take to be these :—1. You can't “uproot centuries” if you try. 2. The “crowds” are always better than they look. 3. The “slaves” are always free in spirit long before they get rid of “their chains.” 4. When the “badge is cancelled,” the “man” who “remains” generally turns out a gladsome, practical creature.

In the nobler vein which so well became him, he vindicated with a poet's insight his own career :—

“ Men counted him a dreamer ? Dreams  
 Are but the light of clearer skies—  
 Too dazzling for our naked eyes.  
 And when we catch their flashing beams  
 We turn aside and call them *dreams*.  
 Oh ! trust me every thought that yet  
 In greatness rose and sorrow set,  
 That time to ripening glory nurst,  
 Was called an ‘idle dream’ at first.”

Mr. Morrison Davidson has published the most comprehensive sketch of the career of Ernest Jones which has appeared, and a noble volume might be made of his poems, speeches and political writings. Because he opposed middle-class projects and broke up their meetings, little attention was paid to his views by those who would have been most impressed by them. Before their day he was as well informed as Karl Marx or Henry George on questions of capital and land, and held eventually wider views of co-operation than were advocated in his time. It would have been economy to mankind to have pensioned Ernest Jones, that he might have devoted his genius to oratory, literature, and liberty.

Those of this generation who have not in their memory any instance of Ernest Jones's eloquence, may see it in the following passage from his Lecture on the Middle Ages and the Papacy.

“ You have been told that the Church in the Dark Ages was the preserver of learning, the patron of science, and the friend of freedom. The preserver of learning in the Dark Ages ! It was the Church that made these ages dark. The preserver of learning ! Yes, as the worm-eaten oak chest preserves a manu-

script. No more thanks to them than to the rats for not devouring its pages. It was the Republics of Italy and the Saracens of Spain that preserved learning—and it was the Church that trod out the light of those Italian Republics. The patron of science ! What ? When they burned Savonarola and Bruno, imprisoned Galileo, persecuted Columbus, and mutilated Abelard ? The friend of freedom ! What ? When they crushed the Republics of the South, pressed the Netherlands like the vintage in a wine-kelter, girdled Switzerland with a belt of fire and steel, banded the crowned tyrants of Europe against the Reformers of Germany, and launched Claverhouse against the Covenanters of Scotland ? The friend of freedom ! When they hedged kings with a divinity ! Their superstitions alone upheld the rotten fabric of oppression. Their superstitions alone turned the indignant freeman into a willing slave and made men bow to the Hell they created here by a hope of the Heaven *they* could not insure hereafter. There is nothing so corrupt that the Papacy has not befriended, and but one gleam of sunshine flashes across the black picture, in the architecture of its churches, the painting of its aisles, and the music of its choirs."

## CHAPTER CIV.

### *PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE IN LEICESTER.*

(1884.)

THE Liberals of Leicester had sent deputations to London in support of Mr. Bradlaugh, who was excluded from his seat in Parliament on the ground of atheistical opinions, which were held to disqualify him from taking the oath. The appearance at the bar of another member equally disqualified to make oath would have strengthened the argument for affirmation. A vacancy occurring at that time in the representation of the borough, I offered myself as a candidate. My primary qualification consisted in my being the only public man in England—not a Quaker—who on no occasion and for no private or public advantage had ever taken an oath. I made it clear that, if chosen as member for Leicester, I should take no oath either by speech or pantomime, nor profane the oath in the opinion of men of Christian conviction, by solemnly repeating words which indicated no corresponding belief in my mind. But if any tribunal, exacting the oath and knowing my opinions, treated the oath as a mere secular undertaking of good faith, there would be neither profanity nor deceit in taking it, though there would be repugnance in using a form of words otherwise disingenuous, ambiguous, and misleading.

Apart from this question, the chances were against me, as I had been long known as one having decided views on public questions; whereas the most presentable candidates are men who have spoken no word of principle—written no books—made no effort—taken no side—professed no principle—helped in no contest—shared in no sacrifice—served in no forlorn

hope. Men who have done nothing, who are uncommitted to anything, and upon whom no one has any reason to depend, are the candidates mostly chosen. The cowards who kept on the outskirts of the field while the fight was going on—all the supine and superfine, who sat before the cosy fire with their feet upon the fender, while the combatants were out in the tempest—find laid at their feet the spoils of progress which others have won.

As to my professions, I said I was no Tory Radical, professing to be more “advanced” than anybody else, and helping the enemy on every occasion. I was no Social Democrat, offering the people comfort as a charity instead of putting in their hands the right and means of commanding it by honest effort. I was no reformer by confiscation. I was not a Liberal who would trust, without conditions, the wise with the fortunes of the many, nor the many with the fortunes of the wise, nor set one against the other—but would charge both equally with responsibility for the honour and welfare of the State. I followed the path of the great Minister who brought in our new Franchise Bill. All other Ministers bringing in Reform Bills have studied how many they could exclude from it. Mr. Gladstone has been the first Minister who has studied how many he could include in it. I am for trusting the Minister who trusts the people, and for supporting with my vote that foreign policy which is just without sentimentality—brave without swagger—which keeps faith with treaties adversaries have made—fights with English courage for English honour, and does not knowingly murder for prestige.

Mr. Herbert Spencer's opinions on Parliament were published at the Leicester election. He, being a thinker and an opinion maker, was well fitted for Parliamentary service. He, however, declined, as he was for individuality and for independence of the views of constituencies. On Mr. Spencer's principle every man would have his will and nobody have his way. He thought “the influence possessed by members of Parliament” was rated too high—the representative being too “subject to his constituents.” Mr. Spencer held that “laws were practically made out of doors and simply registered by Parliament.” He, like Lord Sherbrooke, regarded the duties of the delegate as merely mechanical. Yet could there be a nobler function dis-

charged or nobler office filled than that of explaining the opinions of those who had no other way of being heard save by the mouth of their member? Is a member a machine because he is a delegate? Where is there such a delegate as a judge upon the bench? His instructions are not merely given by word of mouth, or at a poll, but discussed in Parliament, fixed with strictness and printed in books; so that the instructions of a judge are so defined that, when perfect, he can neither misunderstand nor misinterpret them. And yet is there not scope on the Bench for the greatest forensic genius? If a delegate to Parliament was confined as a judge is, he would have ample scope for his independence and individuality. But there is a much wider margin in Parliament. Many who were prominent in smaller circles, as in the Vestry or Town Council, found themselves powerless in Parliament, because there was required more art and persuasiveness—there a man has to see farther, to hear more, to understand better, to master all the points pertaining to a question, to accord regard to the convictions of others, and present a question in a light so clear, and with arguments so conclusive, that he can create conviction on the side of public justice. There is no assembly in the world where there is greater room for the display of the highest powers in representing a constituency, interpreting its views, maintaining them when assailed, and, when need demands, storming the fortresses of the enemy.

There were in Parliament several members disqualified like myself by conviction from taking the oath, and Leicester was the one town most likely to be desirous of opening a door through which an honest man might enter the House of Commons without humiliation. It proved not to be so, and thus my candidature ended.

## CHAPTER CV.

### *THREE REMARKABLE EXILES.*

(1884.)

ENGLAND has often been enriched by the inventive genius of industrial exiles who have sought our shores for religious liberty. Not less has it been indebted to political exiles, who, seeking freedom here, extended it by their teaching and exalted it by their example.

Kossuth was the chief of the few foreigners who took at once a high place as a public speaker in a new tongue. No sooner had he landed than he appeared as an English orator, displaying not only mastery but imposing force. Neither Bright nor Gladstone had then attained like ascendancy on the platform, and Joseph Rayner Stephens, who might be compared with Kossuth for his mastery of tongues, was silent. Since Kossuth's day only one orator has with the same suddenness engaged public imagination—Joseph Cowen. But Kossuth's distinction was the greater because he spoke in a tongue foreign to him. And what was not less striking, his reputation was as much owing to what he said as to his manner of saying it. In his speech on Poland he said : "In the public life of nations, never is anything accidental. There everything is cause and effect. An act of political morality can never be neglected with impunity. Every such neglect is fraught with the necessity of atoning it with sacrifices, increasing step by step, which, however, never will remedy the evil, unless the wrong occasioned by that neglect be redressed. In politics a fault is equivalent to a crime, and no false political step can ever escape punishment."

In speaking in the House of Legislation, Ohio, Kossuth said : "The spirit of our age is democratic. All *for* the people and all *by* the people. Nothing *about* the people *without* the people. That is Democracy." The conception of the popular aspiration and the idiomatic expression of it are alike remarkable. He instructed as well as declaimed. In Kossuth's speeches you found definition as in Paine or John Stuart Mill, which is rare in popular orators and writers.

I published Kossuth's oration on the "Independence of Poland," delivered in Sheffield, June, 1854 ; but his speeches on the "War in the East" and "The Alliance with Austria," delivered in Sheffield and Nottingham the same year, were "published by himself." They were printed by Tucker, Perry Place, Oxford Street, and sold by him. As Kossuth had no place of business, he could not "publish by himself." Probably, by saying so, he merely meant to indicate that they appeared by his authority.

Louis Blanc was long resident in this country. He spent twenty years of exile among us, and understood men and things in England, our politics and prejudices, and more faithfully interpreted them to the French people than any other exile who ever dwelt in England save Mazzini. Mr. G. W. Smalley, an American, not an exile, has excelled in the same art. Kossuth, on the other hand, sometimes entertained suspicions which fuller information would have made impossible. An attempt to serve him would seem to him, as it did to Weitling, something very different. Foreigners as a rule are liable to suspicion, but Kossuth was so distinguished for cosmopolitan attainments that anything ordinary became noticeable in him.

In another respect, not of contrast, but of similarity, Kossuth may be compared with Louis Blanc. Kossuth was regarded as a man of flexible principles, yet, like Blanc, he proved to have inflexibility to a degree unforeseen. Kossuth lacked the penetration of Mazzini, and put such trust in Louis Napoleon as to enter into negotiation with him when he was Emperor ; yet he preferred to live an exile rather than acknowledge an order of things in his own country he disapproved.

Louis Blanc was distrusted because the policy of French Republicanism which he espoused was deemed materialistic. I

published the manifesto of Kossuth, Ledru Rollin, and Mazzini, and also Louis Blanc's "Reply" thereto. Yet Louis Blanc possessed an inflexibility on questions of principle as austere as Mazzini himself. He was many times besought to return to Paris, and offers of a Parliamentary seat were made, to which he answered—

"Duty could only call me to Paris to take part in Parliamentary struggles, if the electors should assign me a post. But this post no power on earth can make me occupy, so long as I must needs, in order to do so, take an oath which is not in my heart.

"Do the people really wish to be the sovereign? Let them elect those who refuse to take the oath; let them elect them, not in spite of, but because of their refusal."

These sentiments are all the more remarkable since few public men in England have expressed them or acted upon them.

This resolution was as noble as the warning was wise, and Louis Blanc remained an exile until Sedan swept the false Emperor away. His exile lasted twenty years. I knew him from the beginning to the end, during his residence in London and Brighton. It was said of him, and of his distinguished but more demonstrative brother Charles, that Charles was a reed painted like iron, while Louis was iron painted like a reed. This was true. Beneath Louis Blanc's passionless cordiality lay impassable determination, which neither profit, nor applause, nor obscurity, nor neglect could divert from honest principle. Though a small man, smaller than the First Napoleon, he had none of the self-assertion by which little people often seek to conceal their diminutiveness. Louis Blanc was a self-possessed man, and, alike when he conversed or spoke on the platform, you never thought of his stature under the boldness of his tones and his commanding gesture.

He ranked among the great political historians of France. Like M. Thiers, he made history a stepping-stone to power. The "History of the Consulate and the Empire" led to Thiers becoming a statesman; and the "History of Ten Years" mainly inspired the Revolution of 1848, and made

Louis Blanc a member of the Provisional Government. Unlike Ledru Rollin, whom he resembled in a noble irreconcilability, Louis Blanc had literary genius and capacity for statesmanship, which consists in understanding what measures are best conducive to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and acting with large toleration. Blanc continued to maintain his influence as a commanding force in French politics until his death. It seemed as though all Paris followed him to the tomb. Since the burial of Thiers so great a concourse had not marched to a tomb until Hugo died. I was proud to be one of his English friends invited by Louis Blanc's family to follow him to his grave.

Ledru Rollin was another exile of note who had a singular career. When he did return to France, another generation had grown up, to whom he was unknown. Exile is a fatal power in the hands of tyranny : since it not only kills influence, it kills reputation. Louis Blanc having literary powers, his pen kept his name before his countrymen. Rollin's power was in the courts, on the platform, and in the Senate. Exile destroyed it. Mazzini said of him that he was the only Frenchman who gave up a public position and sacrificed himself for the welfare of a country not France, and for a cause not French. He incurred exile by his generous championship of the cause of Italy. He was what he appeared in Madame Venturi's painting of him—of manly bearing, of conscious power, yet withal unobtrusive in manner. That Barthélémy—a duellist whom some regarded as a murderer, and who was eventually hanged at Newgate for an undoubted murder—was hostile to the famous tribune is proof that he was less extreme than he was taken to be. Some politicians speak better than they act : Rollin acted more wisely than he spoke. The Royalist press of England decried him because of the title of a book he published some time after his arrival in England—"The Decadence of England." That work contained nothing but what we knew—nothing but what we had said ourselves. Had the great Republican lawyer entitled his volume, "Extracts from the *Morning Chronicle*," or "England drawn by Horace Mayhew," or the "Fall of the English Foretold by Themselves," any one of these titles would have expressed the character of the work. But because the author employed another title, the public were

incited to take offence at the book. Six out of every seven titles of books have no relation to their contents.

The sagacious French jurist, no doubt, saw signs of decadence in England, in aristocratic incumbrance. With the millstone of noble incompetence hanging round the neck of the nation, he might well think Britain was going to sink "ten thousand fathoms deep." What Ledru Rollin could not see was that England has the power of renewing its youth. The Sindbad of Britain will not carry the Old Man of Privilege on its back for ever. Soaring, it will drop the aristocratic tortoise on some well-chosen rock, and smash it. Rollin thought he saw the old English lion stuffed with cotton. The noble brute who, in the days of Cromwell, could roar until he made the isles resound and Europe reverberate, seemed turned into a puff-bellied, flaxen-hearted old beast, whose lungs were a pair of steam-boilers, his breath condensed vapour, his molars spinning-jennies, and his royal old tail a horizontal factory chimney. With these signs before him, Ledru Rollin might conclude the English nation was declining.

When the recruiting sergeant went to Manchester and Preston, did he not find the men too stunted to reach the standard and too weak to wield a sword? The race had been spun up in Jacquard looms. Many who condemned Ledru Rollin's book hastened to abolish these signs of the decline of manhood in our manufacturing towns. We needed a foreigner to tell us this fact which our own statesmen did not see, or did not own, and did not alter, and have not done it wholly yet.

## CHAPTER CVI.

### *REMARKABLE WORKING-CLASS POLITICIANS.*

(1884.)

BEFORE mentioning those who are the chief subjects of this chapter, I cite two who will have no other biographer. One is Allan Davenport, known at the beginning of this century as an enthusiastic advocate of the Spencerian system—not the new one of Herbert Spencer, but his of agrarian repute. Davenport wrote verse. His last publication he dedicated to me. I remember it, because it was the first time that distinction came to me. The poet was thin, and pale, and poor. He lived about the East End, was known at every workman's political meeting, and any surplus over his personal needs arising from his daily labour, was spent in publications giving information to men of his order, whom he sought to serve.

The other was John Weston—the thinnest, wiriest, gentlest, yet most ardent, prompt, and demonstrative of working-class politicians. There was nothing of him save his voice and his ceaseless energy. He was a workman who owed everything to himself. He was a cow-boy and a page-boy in his youth, and at last hand-rail maker—a trade he learned himself. And no man knew it better, or so well, for he wrote a book upon it, which is an authority in the trade. He lived to be seventy-two, working ten to twelve hours a day at the bench, and making speeches when evening came. With the independence which only a good workman can afford to show, he carried his principles into every house, high or low, where he went, and gave his opinions upon public questions to the noblest employer who fell into conversation with him. He stood none of the Imperialistic Communism and State Socialism of Carl Marx,

but confronted that master of agitation, and carried resolutions against him. Whatever good movement was on foot anywhere in the metropolis, Weston was soon in it, if, indeed, he were not there first ; and yet there were more home difficulties in his way, of the Zantippe type, than any man save Socrates had to encounter. But no discomfort deterred him. Of all men of gentle spirit I have known he was the fiercest worker : a jelly-fish in speech, he was dynamite in action. He had the genuine passion of progress which brings good to others, but only gratitude and poverty to those who have it.

Those who look back fifty years usually remember a few persons among working-class politicians of whom they find no parallel at the present day. In diplomacy, in oratory, indeed in every department of human professions or trades, some observe the same thing. Fifty years hence, people will look back upon these days and distinguish a few men in every class who surpassed all others in conspicuousness of service, manifesting qualities unlike any of their compeers. The reason is that there is excellence in every generation, but not of the same kind. The Quintin Matzys and Benvenuto Cellinis have been superseded by machinery ; but the genius which conceives the wonderful machines that now do the work of the world is but another form of genius, and surpasses in its way anything which preceded it. Henry Hetherington, Richard Moore, and James Watson, three working-class politicians, had remarkable qualities not common now, though no doubt there are men of this day as remarkable in relation to their time and the new work now requiring to be done.

Henry Hetherington was a Londoner, being born in Compton Street, Soho, 1792. He was apprenticed to the father of Luke Hansard, the Parliamentary printer. For some time he worked in Belgium. In London he was the most energetic working man who assisted Dr. Birkbeck in establishing Mechanics' Institutions. Though then a Radical politician, he was desirous that working men should have knowledge—the better to use the increase of freedom they were then seeking. In 1830 he was chosen by his Radical colleagues to draw up the "Circular for the Formation of Trades Unions," out of which arose the National Union of the Working Classes ; and out of that union arose Chartism.

In 1831, Hetherington commenced to print and publish his famous unstamped paper, the *Poor Man's Guardian*, at one penny, when newspapers were sixpence and ninepence each. This was the first messenger of popular and political intelligence which reached the working classes. Three convictions were soon obtained against him. He was imprisoned for six months and again imprisoned for six months. The names of "Hetherington, Watson, and Cleave" were in the mouths of every newsvendor and mechanic in the three kingdoms, Hetherington's name being always mentioned first. On the title-page of the *Poor Man's Guardian* appeared the candid but perilous words, "Published in defiance of the law, to try the power of right against might." This was not a profitable business. He had to leave his shop disguised, and return to it disguised—sometimes as a Quaker, a waggoner, or a costermonger. After one of his flights he returned to London to see his dying mother, when a Bow Street runner seized him as he was knocking at the door. To distribute his paper, dummy parcels were sent off by persons instructed to make all resistance they could to constables who seized them, and in the meantime real parcels were sent by another road. His shopmen were imprisoned, his premises entered, his property taken, and men were brought into the house by constables who broke up, with blacksmith's hammers, his press and his type; as the reader has seen recounted in the chapter, "The Trouble with Queen Anne."

In 1840 he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for publishing "Haslam's Letters to the Clergy"—a performance which would not disquiet General Booth, and which Mr. Spurgeon would dismiss with the feeble censure of being a "down grade" book. Hetherington defended himself, Lord Denman saying he had "listened to him with sentiments of respect." Acting on the militant advice of Francis Place, Hetherington indicted Moxon for publishing Shelley's works, when Serjeant Talfourd discovered that the power of indicting gentlemen for publishing the works of gentlemen "was a fearful engine of oppression," which led eventually to restriction being put upon that "right of action" dear to the clerical mind. He died in London, 1849, of cholera, through trusting to his habitual temperance and distrust of medical aid. At his

burial at Kensal Green, 2,000 persons assembled, and I made the first funeral oration it fell to me to deliver. I spoke from the tomb of "Publicola" of the *Weekly Dispatch*, who had oft defended Hetherington in the dark days of conflict. Hetherington had a strong, honest voice and genial manners. He was the first trade unionist who told his colleagues that the co-operative workshop was the bulwark of the strike, and that they were not to rob any class, but take care no class robbed them—or, as Carlyle put it later, "Thou shalt not steal ; thou shalt not be stolen from."

James Watson was a Malton man (Yorkshire), distinguished as a Radical and Liberal publisher by integrity, courage, and a Puritan inflexibility of character. He came up to London to act as shopman to Richard Carlile, and underwent successive imprisonments when judges were insulting and their sentences merciless. A magistrate being ostentatiously Christian was no guarantee of justice or civility in his time. Becoming familiar with Mr. Owen's views, Hetherington undertook in 1828 the agency of the Co-Operative Store at 36, Red Lion Square, and in 1829 he went through Northern towns promoting the formation of co-operative, political, and free inquiry societies. When he came to London, in 1823, it was to defend Carlile, whom he had never seen, and who was then in Dorchester Gaol. Mrs. Carlile had just been liberated after two years' imprisonment. Carlile's house was then 201, Strand. For selling a copy of Palmer's "Principles of Nature," which nobody cared for then and nobody understands now, Watson was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. This was in 1823. Three of his fellow-shopmen were sentenced in 1824 to three years' imprisonment. For ten years the Government did business chiefly in sentences. In 1825, Watson was attacked by cholera, followed by typhus and brain fever. Julian Hibbert took him to his house at Kentish Town and nursed him eight weeks. Watson had learned printing, and Hibbert employed him to set up a Greek work he was writing at that time. Afterwards Hibbert gave Watson press and types, and left him 450 guineas in his will, which Watson spent in bringing out editions of forbidden books. In 1832, when gentlemen went abroad to escape the cholera, and left a Fast Day at home for the poor, Watson was arrested for organising a public

procession of protest against a Fast, when the people needed less labour and more food. Watson and his friends Lovell and Benbow completed their "fast" in the lockup at Bow Street, which was the way to give them cholera. In 1833 he received six months' imprisonment for selling the *Poor Man's Guardian*. In 1834, within a month of his marriage, he was again subjected to six months' imprisonment. But nothing moved him from his purpose. To disparage these sacrifices, it was said in the hostile press that those who incurred imprisonment were tools and were unable to defend themselves. Then they did defend themselves ; when the judges made it worse for them. Watson, Hetherington, Carlile, all who defended the right of the free publicity of Radical or unorthodox opinion, were straightforward and defiant. Whether they fought against the Crown or the Church, they denied nothing they had done, they explained nothing away, they evaded nothing, and they never asked for mercy. Watson published Bronterre O'Brien's "Life of Robespierre," and Babœuf's "Conspiracy," and Thomas Cooper's "Purgatory of Suicides." I was his successor in business.

Hetherington and Watson were friends. Neither would accept any business which one thought the other ought to have, or would like to have. Of the same pursuits, they engaged in the same contests, were inspired with the same ideas, worked for the same public objects. Both suffered in the same way, for the same cause. Both regarded the cause they represented as sacred ; both had pride ; both exalted their principles by their character.

Another who did this was Richard Moore (born in London, 1810), a wood-carver in Hart Street, Bloomsbury. He took an active part in Westminster and Finsbury politics. He was one of the Radicals who acted under the inspiration of Francis Place. He and James Watson married two sisters, who shared their interest in public affairs. The People's Charter was signed by six members of Parliament and six working men. Moore was one of the six, and was one of the Council of the National Political Union of 1830, and of the Chartist Convention of 1839. For twelve years he was chairman of the Association for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge. Though interested mainly in politics, he was, like Watson and Lovett, active in the Socialist movement of Robert Owen, in which he acquired,

as others did, placability of character. He rendered Mr. Owen aid at Gray's Inn Rooms, when Mr. Owen gave the use of his large apartment on Sundays for his friend Edward Irving to preach in, when he had been expelled from the Scotch Church, Regent's Square, for heresy. Moore, as member of the council of the National Union, took part in opening a political newsroom on Sunday, the first time working men had the independence to do it. Mr. C. D. Collett, in his life of Moore, relates that W. J. Fox approved of it, saying working men had as much right as gentlemen had to enter their newsroom on a Sunday. All his life Moore worked at his trade, never seeking anything for himself. He was unnoticed, because he had no speciality save disinterestedness, energy, and good sense. He had no arrogance, or egotism, or bluster, which destroy political associations among the middle as well as among the working class, where enthusiasm in adherents has often been dissipated by personal ambition in leaders. Moore was the reverse of all this. Never swerving from well-considered principle, abating no demand which was ascertained to be just, never imperilling a claim by putting it forward in an offensive way, he persisted in it to the end. On the way to the end, concession of some portion of the demand became oft imperative. These he would accept, and in due time proceed with the advocacy of the remainder.

When the Lodger Franchise Association of Finsbury closed, Moore himself discharged the balance of its expenses remaining unpaid (£20). As he left little at his death, a presentation was made to Mrs. Moore. Mr. Milner Gibson sent £25, Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., Mr. Cowen, Mr. Novello, and others joined. In these days, when newspapers fill columns with notices of the known who have done nothing, it is but justice to devote a little to the unknown who have done much.

The Rev. Mr. White, the Speaker's chaplain, as was befitting the end of the old Parliamentary Reformer, read the service at his grave in Highgate Cemetery, at which Mr. Joseph Cowen was present, which would have given gratification to Moore could he have known it.

William Lovett, with Watson, Moore, and Hetherington, made a quadrilateral of remarkable working-men politicians. Lovett was a Cornish man. In 1828 he was the first manager

of the Greville Street Co-operative Store, where men afterwards famous, as J. A. Roebuck, J. S. Mill, and others, oft attended meetings for promoting social progress. It was Lovett's hand which drew the People's Charter, which Roebuck revised. Lovett was the first person who drew up and sent to Parliament a petition for opening museums and art galleries on Sunday. In 1839 he was imprisoned two years with John Collins in Warwick Gaol for having issued a protest against the violence of the Government in putting down public meetings in the Bull Ring, Birmingham, by London policemen. Lovett published a scheme, devised in Warwick Gaol, of political education for the people, for he was always for intelligent liberty. Lovett was an excellent political secretary. He observed everything, made notes of everything, and kept everything relating to important conference. His fault was that he had too much suspicion of the motives of others not taking his view of things. Later in life he was teacher and superintendent of the only secular schools we had in London, established and supported by William Ellis, an early colleague of Mr. Mill. Lovett died in 1877, and I spoke at his grave at Highgate, quoting as relating to him the words of W. R. Greg :—"It is not by the monk in his cell, or the saint in his closet, but by the valiant worker in humble sphere and in dangerous days, that the landmarks of liberty are pushed forward"—a sentiment which applies to all of whom I have here written.

## CHAPTER CVII.

### *QUITE A NEW VIEW OF JOHN BRIGHT.*

(1850-1889.)

MR. BRIGHT resembled a Company Limited. Compared with average men he was a company in himself, but, not being registered under the Companies Act, few noticed that his trading capital of convictions (if his noble qualities may be so spoken of) was limited. No other simile I can think of so well describes what was not understood about him.

In politics there is more eagerness than observation. Public men are not adequately regarded for what they do, and are often praised for what they do not intend to do. Champions of a popular question are taken to be champions of all that the people desire. Those who have long observed public men know where and on what questions they will fail the people. Hardly ten leaders in a hundred are thorough and can be trusted all round—not so much because they are base, as because they are limited in knowledge or sympathy, and are for a question without knowing or caring for the principle of it. The safe rule is to accord leaders full credit for the service they do render, and not count on more, unless they give reason for such expectation.

The Tory hatred of Mr. Bright which long prevailed was without foundation, and the eulogies passed upon him since his death for merits but lately discerned, have given the public no consistent or complete idea what manner of man he was politically. Not being under youthful illusions as to public men is an advantage. I may do them more justice for the service they do render, and not defame them, nor feel disap-

pointment at their not doing what is not and never was, in their nature to do.

Mr. Bright was not a political tribune of the people, though his fame was political. He was a social tribune—though he was against Socialism. Working men distrusted Mr. Bright when he first became known to them, because he was against the Factory Acts, which he regarded as opposed to free trade between employer and workman, and did not see that where humanity comes in, humanity is to be respected, and is not to be subjected to laws of barter. Mr. Bright was for Free Trade before everything, and the Chartists were of the same mind, being for political freedom before everything. We have lived to see men of higher position than Chartists persist in their own views to the peril of every other interest. Mr. Bright professed no sympathy with Chartist aims, and they knew he was not with them ; but when Free Trade brought them better wages and fuller employment they respected Mr. Bright for his defence of it, and when he advocated the suffrage they thought he was with them in their political theories, not seeing that Mr. Bright was still Conservative, and moving in a plane apart from them. He never expressed sympathy for struggling nationalities. The patriots of Poland—of Hungary, of Italy, of France—never had help from his voice. He was silent on Neapolitan and Austrian oppression which moved the heart of Mr. Gladstone. He was incapable of approving the perjury and usurpation of Louis Napoleon, but no protest came from him. He was for the extension of the suffrage, because it was a necessity—not because it was a right. With him the franchise was a means to an end, and that end was the creation of a popular force for the maintenance of Free Trade, international peace, and public economy. Politically, he regarded the voter not as a man, but as an elector—nor did he think it necessary that all men should be electors. He was content if the majority of the people had a determining power, and whatever franchise gave this was sufficient in his eyes. He had no sympathy with manhood suffrage, and less for womanhood suffrage. He believed in the aristocracy of sex, and thought the political equality of women unnecessary, a perplexing and disturbing element in electoral calculations. That manhood suffrage gave dignity to the individual, by investing him with power and

responsibility, was not much in his mind. Womanhood suffrage, enabling half the human race to bring their quicker, gentler, and juster influence to bear on public affairs in which their welfare and that of their children are concerned, was outside Mr. Bright's sympathies.

There are two sorts of Tories—those who seek power for ends of personal supremacy ; and the better sort, who seek to retain power in order to do good, but the good is to be good they give the people—the Tory belief being that the people cannot be trusted to determine what is good for themselves. Mr. Bright was better than the better sort of Tories. He believed a majority of the people were to be trusted. So far he was for Liberalism—but he was for Liberalism Limited. The Whigs of 1832 put down boroughmongering and entrusted the franchise to a “worshipful company of ten-pound householders.” Mr. Bright was for enlarging that company by the admission of six-pound householders. When the Duke of Wellington heard new prayers read which were not to be found in the old, crude prayer book of the Established Church, he refused to join in them, as being “fancy prayers.” Following in the Duke's steps Mr. Bright contemptuously called any new scheme of enfranchisement, which increased the number of electors indefinitely, “fancy franchises.”<sup>1</sup> The Duke was for addressing Heaven by regulation prayers, and in the same spirit Mr. Bright was for “standing on the old lines.” He was against working-class representation just as the Tories were against middle-class representation. Those in possession always think they sufficiently represent those excluded. Mr. Bright was of this way of thinking. He had this defence : he meant to be just to all outsiders, and did not deem it necessary that they should be able to enforce their own claim in person. Later he applied this doctrine to the whole Irish nation.

He was against the ascendancy of the Church as allied to the State, not because its ascendancy was an offence against equality, but because it was contrary to the simplicity of Christ's teaching as he read it, and because a State Church gave religious sanction to State war. As a man Mr. Bright put Christianity in the

<sup>1</sup> He applied this phrase to my proposal, that proof of intelligence, such as a workman could give and which I defined, should be a certificate of enfranchisement.

first place as a personal influence—as a politician he regarded it chiefly as a public force to be appealed to on behalf of social welfare. What he hated was injustice ; what he abhorred was cruelty, whether of war or slavery ; what he cared for was the comfort and prosperity of common people. Whatever stood in the way of these things he would withstand, whether the opposing forces were spiritual principalities, or peers, or thrones. If they fell, it would be their own fault—the forces of humanity must triumph. He would not set up privilege, nor would he put it down—provided it behaved itself. He was no leveller, he envied no rank, he coveted no distinction ; but he was for the honest, industrious people, whether manufacturers or workmen, having control over their own interests—come what would.

It was to this end that he opposed the Corn Laws and advocated Free Trade and the repeal of the taxes on knowledge. He desired that the people might learn what their social interests were. He was for the extension of the suffrage, that those who came to understand their commercial and industrial interests should be able to insist upon attention, and not have to supplicate for it. If the governing classes had given heed to social interests, Mr. Bright would never have invoked the power of the people. Like Canning, he was for calling in a “new world” [of power] to redress the persistent injustice of “the old.” He would no more have sought the suffrage than Robert Owen would the support of the people, if his aims could have been realised without them. Owen went from court to court ; he waited in the ante-chamber of Sidmouth and Liverpool in vain ; and when courts and Ministers gave no heed he appealed to the people. Because he did so, Liberals and Radicals thought he was with them, but all the while he was a Tory. Bright, like Owen, cared for the people more than for theories ; and the people, whose principles were opposed to thrones, thought the great social tribune was with them all through. This was the mistake which they, and wiser men than they, have made. Bright aided the extinction of slavery because it shocked his sense of justice and humanity ; but had the slave been well treated, and not bought and sold and flogged, he might, like Owen, have seen no such harm in it as to warrant the disturbance of States to put it down. But when its immorality and cruelty became authentically known

to Bright, his noble sense of humanity was outraged, and his splendid eloquence, like O'Connell's, was exerted on behalf of the slave.

He was friendly to co-operators—he spoke for their protection, but never in favour of their principle. Like Bastiat, he believed in the divinity of competition. He was at once the advocate of Peace and Competition—the principle of sleepless and pitiless resistance to the interests of others. With him adulteration was but a form of competition. This is true. But if adulteration be its concomitant, that is the condemnation of both. Mr. Bright thought this reasoning Utopian.

Mr. Bright, like Mr. Disraeli, had little respect for philosophers. He did not dread them like Lord Beaconsfield, but he mistrusted them in politics. The region of the philosopher is the region of the possible. Bright's mind ran always in the region of the practical. His tendency was to regard new rights as "fads." The philosophers laid down new lines—he was content with the old. He, as I have said, ridiculed a franchise founded upon intelligence, as a "fancy franchise." Yet he sat in the House himself under a "fancy franchise." The concession which enabled the Quaker to affirm was a "fancy franchise;" the Jews were brought into the House by a "fanciful" alteration of the oath to meet their tribal but honourable fastidiousness. It was not well that he should have contempt for new paths discovered by thought; but he was not without merit in his preference for established roads, since many men give all their time to searching for new precepts who would be the better for practising the good ones they already have.

If, however, the great Tribune had the characteristics herein described, the reader will ask, "How is it that he was so widely mistaken for an aggressive and uncompromising Liberal?" Most men think that because a man goes down the same street with them he is going to the same place. Bright accepted the aid of the men of right, without sympathy with the passion for right, beyond the helpfulness of its advocates in the attainment of the public ends he cared for. Cobden did the same, but he owned it, and sought such aid. Bright did neither, but did not decline alien aid when it came. He was the terror of the Tories, and they never discerned that he was their friend. He opposed them for what they did, not for what they were.

When riotous Radicals of 1832 had become fat and contented middle-class manufacturers, and were shrieking as dismally as Conservatives against a transfer of power to workmen, Mr. Bright, deserted by his compeers in Parliament, appeared alone on provincial platforms, pleading for larger enfranchisement. Members of Parliament, themselves Liberals, thought the question of the suffrage hopeless for years to come, and said to me, "Why does Bright go about flogging a dead horse?" Tories expressed contemptuous scorn for his enthusiasm. Had he been silent or supine, working men would be without substantial enfranchisement now. What Ebenezer Elliott wrote of Cobbett they may, with a change of name, say of Bright :—

"Our friend when other friend we'd none,  
Our champion when we had but one ;  
Cursed by all knaves, beneath this sod  
Brave John Bright lies—a man by God."

Yet he had limits in his mind beyond which he would not, and did not, go. In 1870, he deprecated the admission of working men in Parliament as likely to increase the evils of class legislation, yet all the while the House of Commons is, and always has been, full of class interests. Mr. Bright and his friend Cobden were the great representatives of the middle class, yet he did not propose that middle-class representation should cease so that the evils of class representation might cease or diminish. If any class at all ought to be represented in the House of Commons, surely it is the working class, who exceed all other classes in numbers and usefulness in the State. But the idea of democracy was not in his mind, and women, as part of the human race, having political interests was simply abhorrent to him. He was always for the Crown, the Bible, and the Constitution as much as any Conservative. He was against the Tories—when they put passion in the place of principle and their interests in the place of duty—but not otherwise.

It is quite a vulgar error to suppose that the democracy are more undiscerning than patricians. They made as many mistakes about Mr. Bright as the people did. An illustrious poet could write of him as :—

" This broad-brimmed brawler of holy things,  
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and sings  
Even in dreams, to the chink of his pence."

True, this was said long ago. But no one who personally knew Bright, at his advent in public affairs, could think this. Bright was no "brawler of holy things." Sincerity and reverence were always deep in his heart. There was no "cotton in his ears." He knew Free Trade and peace would benefit the manufacturer, but would benefit the people more. No politician of his day was less influenced by the "chink of his pence" than John Bright. Carlyle, with all his clamorous philosophy, made the same mistake as the poet, in his contemptuous remark upon the "cock-nosed Rochdale Radical," who had as fair a nose as the scornful "Sage of Chelsea."

All the while Mr. Bright's eloquence was directed to the maintenance of an honest garrison in the fortress of authority. He was the one platform warder of the constitution, but it must minister to freedom and justice. He spoke no word against the throne from his first speech until his last. Quakers ask protection from power ; they never seek to subvert power. Their doctrine of non-resistance makes them the natural allies of monarchs. Penn had the ear of Charles II. Edmundson had ready audience of King James. Shillitoe prayed with the Emperor of Russia, who knelt by Shillitoe's side. Quakers were not spies against freedom, but honest reporters of wrong done, whose honest impartial word kings could trust. Mr. Bright was always of the Quaker mind. He regarded authority as of God, but he held that authority was responsible for righteous rule. He was a courtier with an honest conscience. He was for the perpetuity of the Crown, and also, and more so, for the welfare of the people. In one of his great speeches he avowed :—

"There is a yet auguster thing,  
Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King."

Mr. Bright was always for freedom of conscience, and equally for freedom of action, at the dictate of conscience. "Are mankind to stand still ?" he asked in one of his earlier speeches. He was for order, but with order there must be progress. It was this conviction which made him insurgent against the policy of doing nothing. Now he is gone, there is no great popular Conservative force left, save Mr. Gladstone.

## CHAPTER CVIII.

### *PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MR. BRIGHT.*

(1850-1889.)

OF Mr. Bright's political appreciation of orthodoxy, an instance occurred in connection with the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge. It was proposed that I should move, and Mr. C. D. Collet second, an amendment at the London Tavern, at a public meeting convened by Mr. Peter Borthwick, M.P., for the purpose of founding a separate association for repealing the Paper duty, leaving out the repeal of the Stamp duty, which he did not desire—the Tories being opposed to it, and being also against the abolition of the newspaper stamp, which prevented the people having newspapers in their interests. Mr. C. D. Collet, the secretary, defended my being appointed to make the anti-Borthwick speech, on the ground that I was the most likely person to perform a disagreeable duty in the least disagreeable manner. Mr. Bright, when told of the appointment, objected on the score of policy—it not being advisable that the society should be represented on so conspicuous an occasion by a person of my known opinions on other subjects. "We might be described by the enemy as a society of atheists." Mr. Cobden, who was always for carrying a point by whatever force was at hand, said, when the arrangement was mentioned to him, that "for his part he saw no objection to my moving the amendment in question, as he would accept the assistance of the devil in a justifiable enterprise, provided he observed such regard to personal appearances as might preclude his identity at an untimely moment." As I was considered a person who would fulfil these conditions, I

was appointed. There was no doubt in any mind as to my identity with the sable agitator who had been named. I and Mr. Collet made our speeches, and our resolution was carried. Mr. Milner Gibson, who had remained in an ante-room until the success of the motion was clear, came forward and took part in the meeting, it being thought best that he should not appear at all, unless Mr. Borthwick's proposal was doomed to defeat. Thus it came to pass that the resolution against Mr. Borthwick's separatist project was carried (January 2, 1851), and the Advertisement Duty, the Newspaper Stamp, and the Paper Tax were kept unitedly before Parliament until they were all repealed. Mr. Bright's objection to me was on grounds of policy alone. Personally he was always friendly to me.

As I have said, he possessed a strong sense of personal religion; there was no narrowness in his judgments. He cared more for the conduct of men than for their professions. A Cabinet colleague of Mr. Bright has related that one day objection was made by some one as to the opinions he supposed me to hold, when Mr. Bright, who was present, stopped him by saying, "Holyoake is a very good Christian, and does not know it."

At the burial of Samuel Lucas, the editor of the *Morning Star*, I accompanied Mr. Bright to the grave of his sister, who died soon after her marriage. She was considered beautiful, as most of the Bright family are. Afterwards, speaking of many things, I asked him if he remembered a Moslem said to have been in his father's employ who was considered a famous manipulator of colours.\* The man was unable, even for reward, to communicate his secret. His sense of the quality of colour was an instinct, and he decided the proportions by feeling (by feeth as the Saxons would say more expressively) on passing the colour through his fingers. On my early visits to Rochdale I often heard him spoken of by workmen, he being a foreigner and a Mohammedan. He attended church and passed as a Christian during his lifetime. When, however, his end came, it was found that he had the Koran under his pillow, and that he turned his face to Mecca to die. Christianity did very well for him to live by, but he could not trust it to

\* Mr. Bright did not remember him. Mr. J. A. Bright tells me there is no tradition of him in the family, and he must have worked elsewhere in Rochdale.

die by. In the most unoriental of towns—Rochdale—he preserved his trust in his Oriental faith. Mr. Bright was much interested in the story of the man. He might, had he been in Mr. Bright's employ, have lived openly as a Moslem, and no disadvantage would have accrued to him on the part of his employer. Mr. Bright had in his works men of all political, religious, speculative, and socialistic convictions, who never had reason to conceal their opinions from him.

The last time I saw Mr. Bright was at One Ash, his residence in Rochdale, a few months before his death. He showed me the political presents in his rooms, especially those from America, and pointed out portraits of members of his family known to me. We conversed on many things. He was the same to me as ever, although he knew that with his later opinions I could never be brought to agree—even by the aid of machinery.

He was the friend of his workpeople ; respecting their views, he asked no questions, but they might ask him any, and he was often stopped in the mill yard when his advice was wished in some personal trouble. A visitor might at times see Mr. Bright, while walking home, overtake one of his waggoners, and converse with him as they went along, side by side.

At Lord Palmerston's desire, conveyed to me by Mr. Thornton Hunt, I undertook to ascertain whether Mr. Bright would take office, being of opinion myself that it was not advantageous for a great leader to remain outside the Cabinet, to criticise it for not doing more, and not to go in when it was open to him and attempt to do what he could, where his presence would at least be a deterrent influence against evil measures to some extent. Mr. Bright thought differently, and he was more competent than myself to form an opinion upon that proposal, which concerned himself alone. Years later, when, in obedience to what he was assured was the public interest, and under the influence of Mr. Gladstone's friendship, Mr. Bright took office, he had to present himself to the Queen as one of her Ministers. The Queen, with that personal consideration by which she was often distinguished, remembering that Mr. Bright was a Quaker and might have scruples at kneeling to a monarch, who refused to uncover his head in the presence of God—therefore caused it to be made known to Mr.

Bright that he might, if he pleased, omit the ceremony of kneeling *on* kissing hands. A friend of Mr. Bright's, thinking this act of fine consideration for the feelings of others ought to be made public, asked me to state it. When I had ascertained that there was no objection to the fact being mentioned in print, I communicated it to the *Newcastle Chronicle*; but either from misreading or from the printer having no letter "n" in his case, it was printed "or" instead of "on"; and it went forth that Mr. Bright was at liberty to dispense with kneeling *or* kissing hands on his presentation to the Queen, which was quite a superfluous concession, as a Quaker is never wanting in ceremonial courtesy to a lady, and Mr. Bright—himself a Monarchist by conviction—would never demur to kissing the Queen's hands. The paragraph was copied into *The Times* with the same error in it; it went through the press in the same way. Mr. Camden Hotten, in his edition of the "Speeches of John Bright," repeated it. I wrote to the *New York Tribune* correcting the error in America. Nevertheless, owing to the error of a single letter, it has passed into English history that Mr. Bright neither knelt nor kissed hands when he became Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Paulton, who knew as much as most men of the early history of the Anti-Corn Law League, told me that both "Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden were taught and confirmed" in the principles of commercial freedom they espoused by Mr. Thomas Thomasson. Mr. Thomasson was a manufacturer of Bolton, who understood the political economy of trade better than any other manufacturer of his day. Mr. Thomasson being a Quaker, it was natural that Mr. Bright should be impressed by him. The first time Mr. Bright went out to deliver a lecture, he was doubtful of his success. He had well considered what he would say, but on his way to the hall he called upon Mr. Thomasson to take his advice as to the quality of his arguments. Mr. Paulton said Mr. Cobden had often consulted Mr. Thomasson in a similar way.

## CHAPTER CIX.

### *MR. BRIGHT'S ORATORICAL METHOD AND MANNER OF MIND.*

(1850-1889.)

THOUGH engaged in business, with little time to spare for study, Mr. Bright became a great orator—on the principle explained by the Irishman, who said “a short sleep did for him, because when he slept he paid attention to it.” Force of expression was natural to Mr. Bright. His fine voice and public applause made him conscious that excellence in public speaking was possible to him. But force and finish of expression came slowly. The great speeches of Sheridan and Fox do not—from such accounts as we have of them—justify their great reputation. That is owing probably to their not being adequately reported. When a speaker is master of his subject and sure of his terms, an exact report will give him fame. But if his speech be summarised, his reputation may suffer—unless he who makes the summary is capable of making the speech. Dr. Johnson was a man of this capacity, and his summaries made the fame of the orators of whose speeches he condescended to give an account. Porson said: “Pitt carefully considered his sentences before he uttered them, but Fox threw himself into the middle of his, and left it to God Almighty to get him out again.” Fox got himself out before his auditors, by his overmastering energy, but his reader needed aid. Pitt’s later speeches, fully reported (as I judge from reading some of them), had captivating fluency. When Bright’s speeches are read, they justify the reputation assigned to them. He moved the hearers as Danton and Mirabeau did the audiences they addressed. Mr. Beresford

Hope's description of Mr. Bright—when he was advanced in years—as "the white lion of Birmingham" could best be understood by those who heard him. One night, at Birmingham, when he had delivered a long, forcible, but not brilliant speech, on Ireland, a vote of thanks was accorded to him late in the evening. In acknowledging the vote, there came a storm of oratory from him awakening a fury of enthusiasm in the somewhat languid meeting. "If you, my countrymen," he exclaimed, "are unanimous that justice should be done to Ireland, it shall be done." He spoke the words as though he were the tribune of the kingdom, and his resolute and commanding tone gave the impression that he was able to cause it to come to pass.

In the earlier elections in which Mr. Bright was concerned in Birmingham, he spoke at various ward meetings, when his language was often disjointed, and sometimes incomplete. It might be owing to the work of inferior or wearied reporters to some extent, but the language was that of an ordinary and excited speaker. Mr. Bright himself might be exhausted, but the defects of style were such as exhaustion would not occasion. It was the original manner, which cultivation had not then effaced.

At a Covent Garden meeting, October, 1843, Mr. Bright, in the course of his speech in defence of Free Trade, exclaimed :—

" Oh ! then, innocently brave,  
We will wrestle with the wave  
Where commerce spreads her daring sail,  
And yokes her naval chariots to the gale."

The loud and long-continued cheering evoked was owing to the orator's manner rather than his matter. Twenty-five years later Mr. Bright showed far greater taste in selecting quotations from the poets. Speaking in Birmingham on January 13, 1868, he said—

" Religion, freedom, vengeance, what you will,  
A word's enough to rouse mankind to kill,  
Some cunning phrase by faction caught and spread  
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed."

There was instruction as well as honest rage in these lines.

At the Anti-Corn Law meeting of 1843, as may be read in

the *League* newspaper reports and elsewhere at that period, Mr. Bright told us, in various terms, that the cost of the army and navy was maintained in the interest of the upper class. Twenty-five years later I heard him recur to this idea at a banquet in the Birmingham Town Hall, but no longer in the crude form of earlier days. The fift-headed hatchet was exchanged for a flashing scimitar. He said that "the army and navy were but a gigantic system of out-door relief for the aristocracy." The effect upon the audience was notable. The satire of the expression was caught at first only by the quicker part of the audience, who cheered—when immediately a larger number saw the point and the cheering was doubled—then everybody saw it, and the hall resounded with cheering and laughter and striking the plates with knife and fork. The next day Lord Lyttelton wrote a letter denying that the words were cheered: but the banquet committee had to pay a considerable sum for breakages which occurred at that particular time.

Some years later Mr. Bright was speaking at St Martin's Hall. Mr. Ayrton came in. It was on the day of, or the day after, the great Reform procession which had passed through the Mall. Complaints had been made by the Tories that the procession should have been allowed so near Buckingham Palace. Mr. Ayrton uttered reproaches of the Queen that she had not condescended to witness it. Then Mr. Bright arose and made his famous defence of the Queen. He could not foresee that Mr. Ayrton would come in, nor foreknow what he would say—yet his language was as perfect as though pre-meditated. I sat by him as he spoke, and concluded from that night that a style of dignity and grace had become habitual to him. In earlier years he had spoken of the Queen at Covent Garden meetings with studied respectfulness, but never with the felicity of phrase which he had now acquired. He had the voice of an organ, at once strong and harmonious, which swelled but never screeched. A resolute face and a resolute tone gave him a commanding manner, which, united to a stately way of thinking, gave him ascendancy in oratory. Disregarding details, he put the relevance of a question so strongly that it is difficult to express in other words the same idea with equal force. This is the mark of the style we call Shakespearean,

Miltonic, or Tennysonian—noble thought put in unchangeable terms. A single passage in one of his orations makes clear his method of speech. "I believe, he said, "there is no permanent greatness to a nation, except it be based on morality. I do not care for military greatness or military renown ; I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. There is no man in England less likely to speak irreverently of the Crown and Monarchy of England than I am ; but crown, coronets, mitres, military displays, pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire are, in my view, all trifles light as air, and not worth considering, unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, baronial castles, great halls, and stately mansions do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage." Here is the Homeric, realistic tread of simplicity and power—not among metaphysical abstractions which flit before the mind like shadows, but among men and things palpable to every mind and touching living interests.

The Quaker gets from his self-chosen faith self-sufficiency, concentration, and force, and to this Bright owed his simplicity, directness and massiveness of speech.

In his earlier speeches he made furious personal imputations upon the landlords of the aristocracy who stood in the way of the Repeal of the Corn Laws. They thought he hated them. That was their mistake. On the contrary, he said that, if they would take the part of the people, he should welcome them in council and would "defer to their opinions."

Mr. Bright's invective was owing to his Quaker belief, and he was never free from invective. An everyday man will think his adversary has some common sense, and that if facts could be put before him his opinion would change. But a Quaker says, "I have an inner light which tells me what the truth is, and what is more, you have the same inner light which tells you the truth, and you are sinning against it." The true Quaker regards the "inner light" as the very voice of God, and is more wroth in terms than other men, and has more difficulty in forgiving dissent from his views.

Though a peace-lover from humanity as well as from faith, I once heard Mr. Bright express interest in battle. It was the third year of the American war, and the House of Commons

derided his predictions of the success of the Union, because it had obtained no signal advantages in the field. An eminent American came down to the House and spoke with Mr. Bright on their prospects. Mr. Bright said to me, "If they would give us a victory, we should soon put things right here"—meaning in the House of Commons.

There hung, some years ago, in the National Portrait Gallery, a portrait of George Fox in leathern garments, with a face of great sensual beauty. No wonder the women of fifty towns were in love with him. The portrait inspired me with respect for a man of his nature, who gave up the worship of women for his life in gaols. Seeing Mr. Bright in one of the rooms, I said, "Go and see George Fox's portrait," which he had not noticed ; "you will understand why he came to wear a leather dress and attain his strange ascendancy." He went to see it, and took Mrs. Bright with him, who was then in town.

Mr. Bright never distinguished that sentimentality is the sense of what ought to be, and practicality is the sense of what can be. He had both senses, though he denied it. One night, in the Smoke Room of the House of Commons, I asked him to present a petition for me upon a question he thought unattainable. Seeing a Minister near, he said, "Take it to him. He parts his hair down the middle. He is a man of sentiment—just the man for you." He forgot that he came from the Puritan stock who all parted their hair. He was himself a shareholder in the *Morning Star*. All London was amazed when the hard-headed Manchester school elected to be represented by the sentimental title of old Utopian journals.

Mr. Bright had moral imagination beyond any political orator of my time. The ethical passion glowed in his speeches. It was that which won for him popular trust. One night he had quoted in Parliament George Fox—whom he did not name—a fine passage to the effect—When death shall divest the soul of its human garments of passions and prejudices, and we come to know ourselves as we are, we shall wonder to find how much our intentions have been the same. Speaking to Mr. Bright as he came out of the House, I said : "That peroration was a sermon which only you would have the courage to preach there, and from you only would they listen to it." He answered, "This is a House where sermons are more needed than any place I know."

It may be said of Mr. Bright as Ben Jonson said of Lord Bacon, "There happened in my time one noble speaker, who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language, where he could spare, or pass by a jest, was nobly censorious. No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressingly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness in what he uttered. He commanded where he spoke. The fear of every man who heard him was lest he should make an end."

One morning, at a breakfast at Mr. Gladstone's, he said, "I want to speak to you about your book," meaning the "History of Co-operation in England," which he had permitted me to dedicate to him. "There is only one thing in which I think you wrong. You speak of capital as injurious in itself." I said that was not in my mind. He answered quickly, putting his hand on my shoulder, "But it is in your book." This was true. I had not distinguished that it was certain acts of capitalists which I deprecated.

In 1882, I took to America the fine, almost life-size photograph of Mr. Bright, by Mayall, which I presented to my friend James Charlton, of Chicago. That represents Bright as he appeared when he took the floor in Parliament, with fire and defiance in his face. The *Century* gave an engraving of it. Mr. G. W. Smalley, of the *Tribune*, was to write a paper on Bright. Not being able to do it at the time, it was given to Mr. Escott, a coadjutor of Captain Hamber on the *Hour*. I was indignant at seeing Mr. Bright depicted before the American nation by dashes of Tory disparagement, and resented it wherever I wrote.

One orator whom Mr. Bright would never admit that he equalled, was Wendell Phillips, whom he regarded, he said, "as the greatest orator who spoke the English tongue." In 1879, as Mr. Phillips was showing me the memorable buildings in State Street, Boston, Mr. Bright's son came up. He was visiting America at the time, and I introduced Mr. Phillips to him. Mr. Phillips took off his hat and stood uncovered all the time of the interview, after the Indian manner of doing honour to the father by treating his son with distinction. I wrote Mr. Bright of this fine act of courtesy on the part of Mr. Wendell Phillips. On my return to England he passed me on the platform of the Birmingham Town Hall as he was about to address

his constituents. Not expecting to meet me so soon he turned back and said, "Why, Holyoake, you are always *somewhere*."

During several years I heard all the principal debates in the House of Commons. For two sessions he was continually assailed for his Franchise speeches. So constantly was this done, that every measure he was supposed to favour was condemned, until it seemed that his sympathy with a Liberal bill was dangerous to it. All the while the Tory party had come to see that he was right and had made up their minds to further enfranchisement, and this was the way in which they disguised the concession which had become inevitable. It was exactly the case described by the American poet at the collapse of the Slaveholder's Confederacy:—

"Not all at once did the skunk curl up ;  
We saw it bounce and heard it lie—  
But all the while it was looking about  
For a hole in which to die."

Shortly after, Mr. Bright became the most popular man in the House and the country, and his approval valuable to politicians in difficulties.

The views of Mr. Bright's character I have described are such as impressed me who knew him in movements he liked and in those he disliked. Despite his avowed contempt for sentiment, he was the most sentimental member of the House of Commons. He had the same aversion to philosophers as Lord Beaconsfield, but for different reasons. He had great humility, as Mr. Gladstone has ; but in Mr. Bright it was the humility of genius falling below its own ideal—in Mr. Gladstone it is the humility of duty falling short of the obligation of service due to the Giver of his great powers. Mr. Bright was no friend of democracy ; he had no sympathy for it. With political principles, as thinkers define them, he little troubled. His great passions were for justice, public prosperity, the comfort and contentment of the people. To these ends he devoted his great powers. Of these he was the foremost champion of our time. All else was to him as though it were not. As far as he was concerned, thrones might stand. To him intellectual rights were impracticable ideals. But within the limits in which his mind ranged he commanded the admiration and gratitude of the English people.

This is why the people had honour for Mr. Bright, and put trust in him. He was a Liberal who strove for progress, vindicated it, pleaded for it, urged it forward, attacked all who withstood it. A Tory studies how he can stop it—defames it, obstructs it, and denounces all who are friendly to it: and when, despite of him, it comes to pass, he claims to have originated it.

When Mr. Bright's last illness came, bulletins went out which led the press to make remarks that his end was near. Mr. Bright might not see the papers, but they could not but affect his attendants, and he was too quick an observer not to divine foreboding in their faces; so it came to pass by a friendly suggestion to the bulletin maker that they were less frequent and more placid. Mr. Bright was always cheered by friendly remembrances by his townsmen, and, having to address a great meeting of co-operators in Rochdale, representing twelve thousand of his neighbours, I moved that we sent a message (not a condolence) to him, saying—

“That this assembly, celebrating the forty-fourth anniversary of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers' Society, desires to send to Mr. Bright a message of regard for acts of neighbourly friendship and counsel to the early Pioneers, and for his aid in Parliament in procuring legal protection for societies of self-help in their unfriended days. The Rochdale members send him their grateful wishes. They know he is sustained by a simple and noble faith, and by a conscience rich in a thousand memories of services to those who dwell in cottages or labour in our towns. The days of one who gave his strength for the benefit of the people ought to be “long in the land,” and they who send him this message are glad to believe that his days will be yet long extended.”

It gave Mr. Bright pleasure. It was the only resolution of sympathy made public having no dash of the undertaker in it.

He was the friend of industrious working people everywhere; what is more, he had personal friendliness towards them, and sympathy with them, and helped them in difficulty, in old age, and need, as his own work-people knew. His choice was to dwell among his own people. He lived among them, he died

among them ; he elected to be buried among them, and he left the lustre of his name to their town.

What Lord Tennyson said of the Duke of Wellington may be written on the tomb of Mr. Bright :—

“ His voice is silent in your council hall  
For ever ; . . . yet remember all  
He spoke among you, and the man who spoke  
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour.”

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A new fact concerning Mr. Bright, which illustrates his noble passion for justice beyond all instances I have known, has just been published in the Rochdale Congress Handbook. There is in that town, works known as the Mitchell Hey Mill, started by workmen on co-operative principles, giving the right of profit to all concerned in making it. As soon as the shareholders were numerous enough, they took the workmen's shares of profit from them. “ Mr. Bright expressed disapproval of the decision,” and meeting one of the co-operative leaders (Mr. A. Greenwood) “ inquired if it could not be reversed. A large number of Members of Parliament had taken great interest in the experiment, and he also knew,” he said, “ manufacturers who would have been quite willing to allow workmen to share in a certain amount of the profits.” Mr. Bright accepted the principle that a share in profit was included in equity to labour ; and had Mitchell Hey Mill been permitted to prove that equity could succeed in manufacture, he would have put his own mills on the same plan.

## CHAPTER CX.

### *ORIGIN OF SECULARISM.*

(1850-1890.)

As my name has been associated with Secularism for forty years, and as I have no intention of disconnecting myself from it, nor evading any responsibility for having originated it, I give some account of it before ending the present autobiographical series.

Not seeing in my youth what better I could do in a world where no one seemed infallible than to think for myself, led to my acquiring opinions different from other people. For a time it distressed me very much to find that I differed from the world, until it occurred to me that the world differed from me ; then I had no more anxiety. Those who believe because others believe the same, are without claim to authority ; while those who hold opinions because they have thought them out for themselves, have used the same liberty I had taken, and I was guilty neither of presumption nor singularity. If the world differed from me, it was doubtless in self-defence, and if I differed from the world, it was in self-protection. And, as the world did not make any arrangement to answer for my opinions, it was but common sense that I should myself select the principles for which I was to be responsible.

At Carlyle's lecture, to which he invited me,<sup>1</sup> he took the line he adopted in his *Christian Warrior*, in which he taught that a scientific and mythologic explanation could be given of the main facts of the Bible. When I spoke, I explained the ideas from which I never departed—namely, that mythologic and astronomic modes of accounting for scriptural doctrine could

<sup>1</sup> See "Carlyle the Publisher," vol. i. chap. xxxv. p. 87.

never be made intelligible and convincing except to students of very considerable research. Such theories, I contended, must rest, more or less, on conjectural interpretation, which could never command the popular mind nor enable a working man to dare the understanding of others in argument. Scientific interpretation, I maintained, lay entirely outside Christian acquirements, and seemed to them as disingenuous evasions of what they take to be obvious truths. My contention was—"The people have no historic or critical knowledge enabling them to judge of the authenticity or genuineness of the Scriptures—their astronomic or mythologic origin. That controversy must always be confined to scholars. On the platform he who has most knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, or Latin will always be able to silence any dissentient who has not equal information and reputation for learning and research. If by accident a controversialist happened to have this knowledge, it goes for nothing as authority, unless he has credit for classical competency. In matters of controversy it is not enough for a man to know; he must be known to know, before his conclusions can have acceptance. To myself it was not of moment whether the Scriptures were authentic or inspired. My sole inquiry was—Do they contain clear moral guidance which would increase our certainty of aid from God? If they do, I accept that guidance with implicitness and gratitude. If I find maxims obviously useful and true, judged by human experience, I adopt them, whether given by inspiration or not. If precepts did not answer to this test, they were not acceptable, though 'all the apostles in committee had signed them. To miracles I did not object, nor did I see any sense in endeavouring to explain them way. We all have reason to regret that no one performs them now. It was our misfortune that the power delegated with so much pomp of promise to the saints had not descended to these days. If any preacher or deacon could, in this day, feed five thousand men on a few loaves and a few small fishes, and leave as many baskets of fragments as would run a workhouse for a week, the Poor Law Commissioners would make a king of that saint. But if a precept enjoined me to believe what was not true, it would be a base precept, and all the miracles in the Scriptures could not alter its character: while, if a precept be honest and just, no miracle is wanted to

attest it—indeed, a miracle, to allure credence in it, would only cast suspicion on its genuineness. The moral test of the Scriptures was sufficient, and the only one that had popular education in it, and needed neither ridicule, nor scorn, nor bitterness to enforce it, since it had the commanding advantage of appealing to the common sense and best sense of all sorts and conditions of men, of Christian or of Pagan persuasion. Ethical criticism has this further merit, that on the platform of discussion the miner, the weaver, or farm labourer, are on the same level as the priest. A man goes to Heaven upon his own judgment: whereas, if his belief is based on the learning of others, he goes to Heaven second hand."

My mind being given to open thought, I came to consider whether a simple theory of ethical duty was possible, which would save from indifference the increasing class of thinkers who regarded the theology then in vogue as *vague*, uncertain, irrelevant, or untrue. It seemed to me that doing good was being good—that it was good to do good, and that if a God of Goodness existed he would count goodness as merit; and if no such God did exist, goodness was the best thing men could do in this world. It was best for ourselves for its satisfaction and its example, and it was best for others as they would profit by it. It was not less plain that there was no mode of doing good open to us so certain as by *material* means. What were called spiritual means could not be depended on; the preacher who put his trust in aid from above still found it necessary to take up a collection. Looking to Providence for protection against epidemics or famine, still left a good deal for physicians and Poor Law Guardians to do. Those who, like Mr. Spurgeon, could fill their meal barrels by prayer, had no unfailing formula they could patent, of which the public could purchase the royalty. Clearly science is the only Providence which can be depended upon. Therefore, the morality of duty and material effort were the practical precepts of Life, yielding preservation in this world, and furnishing the best credentials to present in any other.

These principles being few, practical, and demonstrable to any capable of observation and reflection, they constituted an independent code of conduct which, owing nothing to ancient revelations, adherents of such views were under no obligation to

waste time in reconciling the truth of to-day with error of the past. Distinct from received opinion, the form here described is at least equal to it, for, in the words of the Oriental motto before cited, "There is no religion higher than Truth." Secularism, it was hoped, would aid the "coming of the kingdom of man," to which Professor Clifford looked forward.

In my youth I had borne the burden of theologic hopes and fears until my mind ached, and if I could lead others into a simpler, surer, and brighter way, I was wishful to do so. The "Principles of Secularism," which I published, were submitted to the better judgment of others. Not being a fanatic, insisting on opinions without reason or relevance; nor a prophet claiming authority for his word; nor having a "mission" for which there was no necessity; but being one of the few persons extant who had no impression of his own infallibility, I sought confirmation from better instructed minds. One was Mr. John Stuart Mill, who approved my proposal as a useful departure from the theologic thought of the day, ever obstructive of secular improvement. The reader may see the nature of these principles in "Chambers's Encyclopædia" in an article which I wrote at the request of the editor, who "wished an account of Secularism by one responsible for it, and not one by a dissentient, which might be a caricature." Professor Francis William Newman, to whom I was indebted for the better expression of some points than was possible to me, regarded all who believed that duty to man is prior in time and importance to duty to God, as Secularists—and in this sense he might be so classed himself, though he maintains Theism with a noble earnestness like that of Theodore Parker.

That this secular form of opinion implies Atheism is an error into which many fall. Secularism, like mathematics, is independent of theistical or other doctrine. Euclid did not ignore the gods of his day; he did not recognise them in geometry. They were not included in it. But if pagan theology undertook to contradict mathematical principle, Euclid might have joined issue thereupon. But his province was geometry. At one time the only two men of note in England who maintained that the Secular was Atheistic, were Dr. Magee, the late Archbishop of York, and Mr. Bradlaugh. Twice I discussed this point with Mr. Bradlaugh—first about 1856, and again in 1870.

The reader may see the report of the last debate in "A Little Book About Great Britain," by Azimat Batuk, an agent of the Napoleonic dynasty, who wrote under a Turkish name. My argument was that a man could judge a house as to its suitability of situation, structure, surroundings, and general desirableness, without ever knowing who was the architect or landlord ; and if as occupant he received no application for rent, he ought in gratitude to keep the place in good repair. So it is with this world. It is our dwelling place. We know the laws of sanitation, economy, and equity, upon which health, wealth, and security depend. All these things are quite independent of any knowledge of the *origin* of the universe or the *owner* of it. And as no demands are made upon us in consideration of our tenancy, the least we can do is to improve the estate as our acknowledgment of the advantage we enjoy. This is Secularism.

When I first knew the party of independent opinion, it had no policy. Its sole occupation was the confutation of error, or what it took to be error, and went no further. Anything more was not then to be expected. The confutation of theologic error was a forbidden right, and they who exercised it did it at their peril, and they did much who maintained that right. But the time came when those who had succeeded in proving certain received principles to be wrong, were called upon to show what independent and self-dependent principles, in accordance with reason and conscience, could take their places and guarantee the continuance of public and private morality, and not only continue them but improve their quality. It was to this new theory of secular life, the sequel and complement of free criticism, that the name of Secularism was given.<sup>2</sup> Some societies, simply anti-theological, have taken the secular name, which leads many unobservant persons to consider the term Secularism as synonymous with atheism and general church-fighting ; whereas Secularism is a new name implying a new principle and a new policy. It would be an impostor term were it merely a new name intended to disguise an old thing.

<sup>2</sup> In Chambers's "Encyclopædia," in Molesworth's "History of England," in Cassell's "Encyclopædic Dictionary," in Dr. Murray's Oxford Dictionary, the reader will see definitions of it. In theological literature readers may meet with fair estimates of it. "Mr. Holyoake taught us many years ago those truths of Secularism which are happily no longer neglected by Christian teachers."—Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, in *New Review*.

## CHAPTER CXI.

### *THE KNIGHT WHO UPLIFTED THE DEAD HAND.*

THE "dead hand" has destroyed the grace of many gifts, as when a man endows a church on the condition that certain doctrines are to be for ever preached in it. This precludes progress in thought and furnishes a premium to the gentleman in the pulpit to go on preaching what is no longer true, and if true no longer useful to the hearers. The doctrine is dead, but the dead hand cannot be lifted. Though the object of the endower was no doubt that truth should be preached, yet the spirit of his provision cannot be acted upon owing to the terms of his gift not providing for this. In the case of charity schools it is different. The dead hand gets uplifted by cupidity. Schools founded for the education of poor scholars or poor children are perverted to the uses of children of the rich. The intent of the founder, his spirit and letter are alike set aside.

I knew one great donor who left no dead hand on his gifts, though they amounted to half a million. In Birmingham there lived, until lately, one Josiah Mason, who, when I and others were advocates of Social views in Lawrence Street Chapel, used to be one of the hearers. Josiah Mason had an inquiring, an observant, and ambitious mind, but his ambition was the wholesome ambition of usefulness. He had risen from the humblest occupation. When a young man he held a situation as manager of a business in which his master promised him a partnership. Under the inspiration of this promise he had put into his service the zeal and sagacity of a partner. At length he found that the promise was not to be fulfilled ; he left, and no inducement, not that of a salary higher than he

had any prospect of obtaining elsewhere, could induce him to stay. He had self-reliance and self-help in him. No honest duty was beneath him, and industry and probity did the rest. He knew that thrift was fortune. He became a manufacturer eventually, and when the day of prosperity came, he built a great orphanage at Erdington, open to children of any sect and of any race. Neither opinion nor colour was a bar to admission. He had acquired Robert Owen's passion for the formation of character, and concluded that wholesome conditions and good practical education would go a good way towards it in the young. One day he explained to me himself his arrangements, which showed that he was a kindly student of child nature. He had their baths made of wood, and the spaces around on which they stepped into the bath also of wood, so that no cold or discomfort should be associated with a healthy habit, rendering it distasteful and repugnant. He had all the doors in the buildings made so that they would open in or out by a child pushing them, that the little ones might not be impeded nor kept in or out by knobs difficult to turn. He had the beams of the roof left visible, that a child who could not understand why the ceiling was kept up might see it was supported and would not fall down. The gas and water pipes he had left visible, so that they might understand everything that was liable to instruct them or excite their curiosity. In the chapel in which they were assembled on Sundays he prescribed that a preacher of any denomination might conduct the service, providing he was willing to discourse a wise and kindly morality, omitting the awful tenet of eternal punishment, which he thought a fearful terror to the young mind and a barbaric conception of God.

Adopting a wise provision, suggested by a philosophical lawyer he consulted (Mr. G. J. Johnson), he gave the whole property in trust to persons half chosen by himself and half by municipal authority ; and at his decease the trust was to be entirely controlled by the town. A further wise provision was that, at the end of every thirty years, the trust should be open for two years for suggestions of improvement in its objects needed to meet new requirements which time and experience might develop. Thus was substituted the authority of the public interests for the dead hand of the donor. I do not

remember any like instance of tolerant and sagacious thoughtfulness enabling a great public gift to be kept in line with public progress.

The trustees chosen by Mr. Josiah Mason for the administration of the orphanage were nearly all personal friends of mine. Meeting some of them shortly after the endowment (which amounted to nearly a quarter of a million of money) was placed in their hands, I asked "Under what circumstances they received it and by what ceremony it was accompanied. Did they assemble the citizens in the Town Hall and receive from his hands the splendid gift with circumstances of public honour?" It transpired that they had met him at luncheon at the Orphanage, received the transfer of the building and its opulent endowments, and wished him good morning. Considering that the giver of so unusual a gift was entitled to public honour, I inquired why did they not ask a knighthood for him? Honour was the wine of old age, and such a recognition would be creditable to the town. The answer was they did not see how it was to be done, but if I thought it possible I might take any steps to that end with their concurrence. Then I mentioned the matter to such members of Parliament as I thought might take an interest in municipal equity. I wrote upon the subject in the papers, and asked Mr. Walker, the then editor of the *Daily News*, who was always ready to promote any project for local or public good, to mention the matter in his columns. Public honour conferred upon mere worth is hard to be obtained until the public take interest in it, and to do this it is necessary that they have information. It was also necessary that the knighthood I suggested should be concurred in by the members of Parliament for the borough in which Mr. Mason dwelt. Mr. George Dixon readily assented, and supported the proposal; but Mr. Bright saw objections to it, and asked me, "Whether I thought it a good principle that a man should be made a knight because he had given £200,000 to a town?" I answered, "If the question was whether an order of knighthood or other social distinctions should be created, its usefulness was open to contention; but, knowing as he did how knights were made, how men who never rendered any public service received that distinction, and many because they had become possessed by ways unknown of £100,000—it did seem to me

not an unprofitable principle to establish that any one who *had given £200,000* to the community should be eligible for a knighthood." Mr. Bright admitted there was some reason in that view, and when he learned that Mr. Mason had not proposed to leave this money at his death liable to dispute and doubtfulness of application—but had actually divested himself of it while living, and placed its administration in the hands of the municipality—he concurred in the proposal.

In the deed of trust which Mr. Mason executed, he stated that when he first entered Birmingham as a youth he sold muffins in the streets. No bell had a purer tinkle than his. No muffins were warmer or cosier than his in the clean green baize which covered them. From that humble beginning he had risen by industry and integrity to the possession of great wealth, which he had devoted to a well-considered public purpose. I asked a member of the Government, Mr. Stansfeld, whose friendliness to unrecognised service I knew, to put Mr. Mason's candid and manly story into the hands of the Queen, who I believe would be interested in it. She was interested, and considerably ordered that Mr. Mason's knighthood should be gazetted that he might be saved the necessity of appearing at Court to receive the distinction, at his age, which was then 78. Thus the benefactor who made a great gift and attached no dead hand to it became Sir Josiah Mason. When I received intimation of the Queen's decision, Mr. George Dixon, M.P., said it was for me to communicate it to Mr. Mason because I had caused it to occur. I had pride in it, because it added well-earned dignity to one who was the providence of little children, and had done a generous thing in an unexampled way, and who would otherwise have remained unrecognised by any public distinction. Sir Josiah Mason afterwards gave a quarter of a million more to found and endow the Mason College in which no creed or want of one is any disqualification for entering it.

## CHAPTER CXII.

### *APOLOGY TO THE READER.*

MANY books at their close need this: and he who has perused these chapters has probably thought some apology was due long ago. The story of many persons and many events remain untold in them; should I ever tell them, as in those I have related, one characteristic will be found—that of depicting the manners, prejudices, and progress of my time, so far as, judging from my own experience, may be of use to others. In any manifesto of a committee, of which I have been one, I have asked, in mercy to others, for brevity and clearness. Having myself a full share both of perversity and dulness, the statement which compelled my assent might be intelligible to the public; for I never put myself forward as representing other than the average stupidity of mankind. In this way I have been of service to men wiser than myself. Only in this way I may have been of service to the reader, who, being better informed than the writer, has been saved time in making out his meaning.

Forty of my colleagues of former years, all counted, have died by my side, and I should be dead also had I been as strong as they. Being otherwise, I had to keep both work and pleasure within the limits of my strength, whereas they, being like Dr. Wendell Holmes's "one-horse shay," equally strong in every part, went down, without suspicion or foreboding, altogether.

In my life one constant source of pleasure has been—that of laughing at the absurdity of the things I like. Seeing principles as objects apart from me, I could not but notice the grotesque way in which unconsciously they were sometimes carried out. A friend of mine who had progress in his heart and was bent upon the redemption of the world, which has been

the ambition of noble men in all ages, founded a "Redemption Society"—a big business surely—and we began to acknowledge the weekly receipts in the *Leader*, which ran—Leeds, 7d.; London, 10*½*d.; Glasgow, 1s. 3d. These small sums for a vast end made it look absurd. I suggested that the contributions should be allowed to accumulate before inserting them, which caused me to be counted unsympathetic. In speech, in conduct, as in judgments, I am for proportion. In social and political aims credence depends upon proportion between progression and possibility. Far be it from me to pretend to be without points of amusement in the judgment of others. The only apology for absurdity lies in admitting it when you have committed it. There is no safeguard against ridiculousness, save by looking outside yourself, and observing the reflection which conduct makes in the mirror of circumambient eyes.

Many who enter on the path of public service are repelled, as I have seen, by the prevalence there of aspirants for the position of pontiffs, chiefs, and lesser popes and potentates. Yet it is a good sign that this ambition exists. When, however, these persons are found decrying the thing another is doing, which you therefore conclude to be wrong and extol them for their wiser perception—you are discouraged on finding that they did not consider the thing wrong, but sought to prevent another doing it in order to have the credit of doing it themselves. Carlyle, proclaiming the doctrine of silence in order that his own voice might be alone heard, is an instance of the same thing in literature. Surprise on the first discovery of this artifice is one of the instructive shocks of experience.

The ambition of distinction is wholesome so long as it permits equal opportunity to others. In democracy there is no chieftainship to which others must submit their judgment against their reason. There is no legitimate leadership, save the leadership of ideas, no allegiance save that of conviction, no loyalty save loyalty to principle. The passion of personal ascendancy—the more than impatience, the dislike such persons have of submitting their conduct to the judgment of others—their belief that they are superior persons and all others inferior—the desire to keep others separate and apart—the reluctance to consult them except when applause or suffrages are necessary to the success of their aims

—lies deep in the hearts of those who seek personal ascendancy. When the genius of democracy enters the mind and teaches a leader to aim at the elevation of his cause or his country, rather than the elevation of himself, then he says with Byron—

“I wish men to be free  
As much from mobs as kings—from you as me.”

Those who look back on life disappointed because it has not been what they wished it to be, should be put back again into the kingdom of the unborn—they do not understand the world into which they have come. Those who look on their days with regret because they have not been what they might have been had they availed themselves of the opportunities they have had, have not adequately observed what has gone on around them. No one does avail himself of all his opportunities. Every one has to regret fatal or irreparable omissions. The dice of life are loaded by unseen agents before we throw them, and we may be glad if we win anything, not discontented because we do not win all.

My information, all told, does not amount to much ; but the best and surest part of it has been gained in discussion, and in listening to criticisms. It is wise to believe in the Arabic proverb :—

“Men are four.

“He who knows not, and knows not he knows not. He is a fool ; shun him.

“He who knows not, and knows he knows not. He is simple ; teach him.

“He who knows, and knows not he knows. He is asleep ; wake him.

“He who knows, and knows he knows. He is wise ; follow him.”

Sayings are like glowworms. It is only in the night of experience that we discern the light in them. One reads the saying of Pascal : “What an enigma is man ! What a strange, chaotic, and contradictory being. Judge of all things, feeble earthworm, depository of the Truth, mass of uncertainty, glory and butt of the universe !” It was a long time before it became

evident to me that these contradictions which Pascal discerned of men in the aggregate are true of every man. Each individual has within himself, latent or operant, all the characteristics of the race, which opportunity or circumstance (more enduring than opportunity), brings out. Byron saw that man was "half dust, half deity." Like Carlyle, a man may be at once brutal, contemptuous, and tender—unjust, yet loving justice—reverencing right in man, yet exhorting them to despotism. Seeing that every person possesses all the qualities of mankind in proportion, what remains but to look with unexpectant eyes upon all, waiting to see what baser elements have been repressed or transmuted by wise education and noble conditions of life, or what lofty principles have been exalted and confirmed. Only on such considerations can a man protect himself from mistaken judgments and irreparable disappointment.

It is less difficult to inspire persons with the passion for knowledge than to induce them to extend the advantage of it to others. Too many despise those in the condition from which they have escaped ; their contemptible philosophy is that of the Coptic song which tells us that everywhere

" This, and but this, was the gospel alway :  
Fools from their folly 'tis hopeless to stay,  
Mules will be mules by the law of their mulishness ;  
Then be advised and leave fools to foolishness—  
What from an ass can be got but a bray ? "

But mankind are not asses, though he is who thinks them so. Certainly there are men of mulish minds, and their muline judgments have to be tolerated on grounds of heredity. But none knew better than Goethe, who wrote the Coptic song, that the average man could be exalted. To this he contributed by his splendid genius. He who alleges the unimprovability of others as an excuse for his doing nothing for them—and thinks only of himself—forfeits his right to exist. There is no place or need for him in another life ; and were he raised from the dead, it would bring resurrection itself into contempt.

Once I had opportunity of aid unforeseen by me. A valued friend (Mr. W. H. Dingnan), whom the Government of the day desired to requite for public service, generously proposed that I should be requited in his stead. It being intended, I wrote to

Mr. Gladstone "not to give heed to it as I could not accept anything. I had spent many years in teaching working men the lesson of self-help, and that it was the duty of the people to support the State, and not the State the people. Should blindness come again or age render me incapable of my accustomed work, I might think differently." Age, with noiseless and unnoticed steps has arrived, and friends with it, who have mitigated its disablement. In 1876 Mr. John Stephens Storr, and in 1888 Mr. Thomas Allsop, were the cause of it. On each occasion a Committee, whose names will always be in my mind,<sup>2</sup> enabled all future work by me to depend on choice and pleasure.

A curious feature was this: Some whom I had served, not without cost and peril to myself when I might rightly have served myself instead, were as the Levite and passed by on the other side; while others I had never known, even by name, whom I had never seen, upon whom I had no claim, whom I never had opportunity of serving, with others whose thoughts were alien to mine, showed me a disinterested friendliness. The world is a field sprinkled with generous seed which springs up in unexpected and unknown places. Whatever I have done since, I owe to these diversified friends. They gave me length of days and pleasure greater than they can know.

Every one who has taste in ideas, and is above adopting second-hand opinions—because they can be had cheap—incurs trouble in selecting those of the best quality and testing them himself. He who does this has trouble, but his pleasure and pride in true thinking is greater than the slovenly and shabby minded ever know. If a man could believe in everybody's creed, it would make things pleasanter in this world, and perhaps safer for the next; since surely some of them must be the right ones. But he thinks meanly of the arbiters of Heaven if he supposes its doors are open to applicants of indolence, calcu-

<sup>2</sup> Among them were George Anderson, Robert Applegarth, Major Evans Bell, Lord Brassey, Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, Thomas Burt, M.P., Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., Right Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, Bart., Rev. J. R. Green, Judge Hughes, Walter Morrison, M.P., E. Vansittart Neale, Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D. To Drs. George Bird and Hugh Campbell I owed the recovery of my health, and to Mr. Brudenell Carter the restoration of my sight. Nor can I be unmindful that Professors Bain, Huxley, Newman, and Tyndall, that Harriet Martineau, Herbert Spencer, and many others, were among those to whose friendship I was indebted.

lation and low taste. The “land of the leal” belongs to those who, like Savonarola, judge not authors according to their fame, nor accept opinions because they are in vogue, but always keep their eyes fixed on truth and reason ; not to those who, in Diderot’s words, think it more prudent to be mad with the mad than be wise by themselves. This is my apology to the reader for that wilfulness of opinion which I fear has often perplexed or perturbed him in these pages.

THE END.

# INDEX.

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ABERDEEN, Lord, i. 174  
Abinger, Lord, i. 107  
Ackworth, Rev. Dr., i. 255  
Acland, James, League agent who rode a white horse, ii. 226  
Adamses, the, i. 110, 150, 158  
Adler, Dr., the wise Rabbi, i. 262  
Admiralty, the, connives at deceit, ii. 98  
adventures with loaded shells, ii. 20, 23  
Age imparts sense of proportion, i. 2  
Albert, Prince, early ideas of International Exhibitions, i. 19, 46, 198; a supporter of Sunday music, i. 270  
Alexander, Mr., the Bubb barrister, i. 159  
Alexander, Mrs., i. 159  
Allday, J., i. 28  
*Alliance News*, i. 272  
Allsop, Thomas, the elder, i. 1  
Allsop, Thomas, ii. 303  
Ambition, its limits, ii. 166; characteristics and policy, ii. 127, 196  
Anderson, George, ii. 253, 303  
Anderson, Rev. Dr. "Willie," i. 263  
Andre, St., Jules Chevalier, ii. 6  
Anne, Queen, i. 273-4  
Anti-Corn Law League, origin of, ii. 224; its publications, ii. 226  
Applegarth, Robert, ii. 194; ii. 303  
Arabic Proverb, ii. 301  
Arnold, Dr., ii. 127

Ashurst and Son, i. 98, 155, 182-3  
287, 290  
Assassination, a righteous instance, ii. 27  
*Athenæum*, i. 278, 281  
Atherley, Gibson, ii. 248  
Attwood, Thomas, i. 26, 45, 103; ii. 230  
Audience, curious varieties in an, i. 138  
Aveling, Dr., i. 269  
Axon, W. E. A., ii. 221  
Ayrton, A. S., civility contrary to his nature, ii. 46; yet true to principles, ii. 47, 147

BABŒUF, Gracchus, i. 96  
Bacciochi, Count, i. 91  
Bailey, Samuel, ii. 152  
Bain, Prof. A., ii. 303  
Baker, Col. V., ii. 250  
Baker Daniel, i. 15  
Bakounine, the giant refugee, i. 95  
Balfour, Clara Lucas, i. 122  
Balfour, A. J., i. 86  
Ballantyne, Thomas, i. 234, 238  
Ballantyne and Lord John Russell, i. 234  
Ballot, new defence of, ii. 181-2  
Bally, Monsieur, the evasive Swiss, i. 62, 66-68  
Bandiera, the Brothers, i. 173  
Barker, Joseph, without the sense of taste, i. 126  
Barrister, choosing a, i. 158

Barthélémy, M., ii. 261  
 Bate, F., i. 202  
 Bathurst, Bishop, the prolific, i. 109  
 Batuk, Azimat, ii. 294  
 Beaconsfield, Lord, ii. 274  
 Beadon, Mr., an un-English magistrate, ii. 56  
 Beales, Edmond, ii. 186-7-9  
 Beaufort, Duke of, ii. 248  
 Beesley, Prof., i. 267  
 Belcher, James, i. 77, 84  
 Bell, Major Evans, ii. 245, 303  
 Belloc, Madame, i. 225  
 Bem, General, i. 96  
 Benares, motto of the Maharajahs of, i. 140  
 Bentham, Jeremy, i. 189, 215  
 Berkeley, Henry F., letter from, ii. 180  
 Berkeley, Craven, M.P., i. 153  
 Bernard, Duke of Saxe Weimar, his definition of Owenism, i. 127  
 Bernard, Dr. Simon, i. 91; ii. 19, 33, 34  
 Bertani, Dr., i. 101  
 Besson, M., ii. 64  
 " Beware of being too good," ii. 162  
 Bezzi, Sig., i. 96  
 Binney, Rev. Thomas, the first preacher of Secular Christianity, i. 259  
 Birch, J. W., i. 118, 175  
 Bird, Dr. G., ii. 303  
 Birkbeck, Dr., ii. 264  
*Birmingham Weekly Post*, i. 9  
 Birnie, Dr., ii. 222  
 Birth, its irresponsibility, i. 15  
 Bismarck, Prince, i. 239  
 Black, Dr., i. 279  
 Blacksmith, a, of the Ruskin type, i. 20  
*Black Dwarf*, i. 4, 27, 31, 129  
 Blackwood, Helen, in *Jail Square*, ii. 116  
 Blanc, Louis, saying of, i. 93; character of, ii. 260  
 Blind, Karl, i. 95  
 Blood-money, an offer of it, i. 113  
 Blue Books for working class, ii. 168, 170-1  
 Blum, Robert, ii. 31  
 Bodichon, Madame, i. 225  
 Bodkin, Mr., Sir Robert Peel's " Bodkin," ii. 65  
 Bomba, King, i. 124  
 Bombardier Scott, his trial and fate, ii. 100  
 Borthwick, Peter, i. 281; ii. 277  
 Boswell, up to date, ii. 241  
 Bottesini, Sig., i. 91  
 Bowring, Dr., ii. 222  
 Boxall, Sir Wm., ii. 239  
 Bradlaugh, Charles, ii. 43, 49, 98, 216, 255, 293, 303  
 Bradley of the silver cradle, i. 27  
 Brassey, Lord, ii. 303  
 Breadalbane, Marquis of, i. 124  
 Brickman, Captain, ii. 14  
 Bright, John, letter from, ii. 180; his emendations, ii. 222-229; a social tribune, ii. 271; limits of his principles, ii. 272; his sympathy with monarchy, ii. 275; his tolerance as an employer, ii. 279; his first appearance at Court, ii. 278; his step-by-step attainments, ii. 282; his method of mind, ii. 283; message to him from the Pioneers, ii. 288  
 Bright, J. A., M.P., ii. 278  
 Bright, Samuel, disquiets Napoleon III., ii. 136  
 Brindley, Rev. Dr., i. 48-50  
 British Association, the, amends its description of Napoleon III., ii. 215  
 Broadhurst, H., ii. 194  
 Brooke, Rev. Stopford A., i. 80, 256\*  
 Brooks of Oxford Street, i. 220  
 Broome, Johnny, ii. 110  
 Brougham, Lord, ii. 12, 31, 40  
 Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, ii. 164  
 Bubb, the Cheltenham, i. 149  
 Buchannan, Robert, father of the poet, i. 141, 183  
 Buckingham, Duke of, ii. 203

Buckingham, Rev. Mr., i. 12  
 Buckle, Thomas Henry, his appearance, ii. 93; his brilliant defence of the Cornish well-sinkers, ii. 94  
*Builder*, i. 278  
 Bull Ring, Birmingham, i. 83, 84  
 Burnes's Despatches, ii. 76  
 Burns, Robert, i. 207  
 Burrows, Cordy, ii. 213  
 Buxton, Charles, M.P., ii. 143  
 Byng, Mr., M.P., ii. 48, 54  
 Byron, Lord, his wish, ii. 301  
 Byron, Lady Noel, i. 304

**CADBURY**, John, i. 48  
 Calcraft, the teacher of murder, ii. 116  
 Calcraft, H. G., ii. 168  
 Calonne, M. de, ii. 172  
 Cambridge House, i. 227  
 Campbell, Lord, the Whig Judge, ii. 33  
 Campbell, Rev. Dr., 258  
 Campbell, Dr. Hugh, ii. 303  
 Canning's accusation, i. 279; ii. 273  
 Capper, Mr., i. 145  
 Carbonell, Mr., ii. 13  
 Carlile, Richard, i. 101, 112, 129, 164, 189; ii. 22  
 Carlyle, "Jean Welsh," i. 194  
 Carlton's warning, i. 265  
 Carlyle, Thomas, i. 76, 104, 191, 192; Janet, visit to her in Canada, i. 193, 290; ii. 303  
 Carnarvon, Earl of, ii. 197  
 Carpenter, William, ii. 63, 211  
 Carter, Brudenell, ii. 303  
 Cartwright, Major, i. 31  
 Carvallo, Mr., i. 251  
 Castlereagh, Lord, i. 276  
 Canterbury, Lord, his letter to Lord Kimberley, ii. 177  
 Cato's question, ii. 27  
 Cavendish, Lord, ii. 125  
 Cavour, Count, ii. 28  
 Cellini, Benvenuto, ii. 26  
 City House of Commons, i. 154

Chamberlain, Joseph, ii. 303  
 Chambers Brothers, i. 217; ii. 160  
*Chambers's Journal*, i. 217  
*Chambers's Encyclopædia*, ii. 293-4  
 Champneys, Basil, ii. 244  
 Channell, Baron, ii. 12  
 Chappell Smith, Mrs., i. 122  
 Chapman, Dr. John, i. 239, 258  
 Charlton, James, i. 2  
 Chartist policy of resentment, i. 85  
 Chatterton, Mrs., i. 216  
 Chesson, F. W., i. 98  
 Cheltenham in 1841, i. 145-6  
 Chevalier St. André, the Napoleonic spy, ii. 4; his fascination and resource, ii. 5  
 Chichester, Mrs., i. 162  
 Chilton, W., i. 142  
 Christian Socialists, the, ii. 6  
 Christs, the two, i. 260  
 Claimant, the, ii. 9  
 Clarendon, Lord, ii. 167, 170; letter to, ii. 168; concedes working class Blue Books, ii. 168  
 Clay, Sir William, ii. 42, 45  
 Clayton, Moses, ii. 253  
 Cleave, John, i. 102; ii. 265  
 Clifford, Prof., ii. 293  
 Close, Rev. Francis, 148  
 Clôture of Clamour, ii. 231  
 Coates, Mr., i. 49  
 Cobbett, William, i. 120  
 Cobbett, Miss Helena, i. 220  
 Cobbett, James, i. 221  
 Cobden Club, the, i. 237  
 Cobden, Richard, on the rashness of doing nothing, i. 148; his predictions, i. 289; his shrewd estimate of Palmerston, ii. 76; his kindness to a convict's wife, ii. 3; on the final success of the League, ii. 229; his judgment of Gladstone, ii. 212  
 Cockburn, Lord, his Wainwright charge, ii. 154, 282  
 Colenso, Bishop, messenger from him, ii. 82; perils of his zeal, ii. 85; strange lawsuit of, ii. 89; Lieut-

Lecount, ii. 89; defence of Colenso  
 against Dr. Cumming, ii. 91  
 Coleridge, Lord Chief Justice, his  
 new Charter of Free Discussion,  
 ii. 92; his controversy with Buckle,  
 ii. 94  
 Coleridge, S. T., his description of  
 the Socialists, i. 49; ii. 246  
 Collet, Dobson Collet, his genius as  
 a secretary, i. 281; Cobden's  
 testimony, i. 280, 281, 285  
 Collet, Sophia Dobson, i. 225  
 Collings, Jesse, the Tory portrait of  
 him, ii. 230  
 Collins, John, i. 103; ii. 269  
 Collins, Wilkie, ii. 5  
 Combe, George, incidents in his  
 career, i. 49, 60-5  
 Combe, Dr. A., i. 63  
 Commissioners, Mayne and Harvey,  
 ii. 135  
 Communism, English, defined, i. 196  
 Comte, Auguste, i. 120  
 Comtists, the, ii. 128  
 Coningham, William, M.P., ii. 68  
 Coningsby, Robert, ii. 170-1  
 "Congress," introduction of the  
 term, i. 134  
*Contemporary*, ii. 126  
 Controversialists adjacent, i. 303  
 Conversion under difficulties, i. 168  
 Conway, M. D., i. 269  
 Co-operative League, the, of 1839,  
 ii. 3.  
 Cooper, Rev. Robert, i. 165  
 Cooper, Bransby, i. 164-6  
 Cooper, Robert, ii. 69  
 Cooper, R. A., bewilders Bishop  
 Magee, i. 98; ii. 201  
 Cooper, Thomas, i. 103, 104, 172  
 Cooper, Bransby, a magistrate of  
 "tumultuous passions," i. 165  
 Corbett, Mr., Pauline agitator, i. 32  
 Corday's, Charlotte, knife, ii. 60  
 Corder, William, ii. 150  
 Corti, Count, ii. 106  
 Cowen, Joseph, i. 26, 119, 296; ii. 2,  
 258, 268

Cranbrook, Lord, i. 108  
 Crank, the, definition of, ii. 97  
 Craufurd, E. H. J., the conquering  
 "Zero," i. 283, 284; ii. 104  
 Crisp, J. S., i. 258  
 Cromer, courage of the fishermen  
 there, ii. 144; vicar of, *ibid.*  
 Crompton, Mr., the copper mer-  
 chant, i. 20, 48  
 Crompton, Rev. W., i. 48  
 Cromwell, Lord Protector, ii. 60  
 Crown, the, unsuspected power of,  
 ii. 193  
 Cruikshank, George, i. 292, 293  
 Cuffy, the black Chartist, ii. 3  
 Cuffy, Mrs., ii. 3  
 Cumming, Dr., ii. 90  
 Curtius's calculation, ii. 61

*Daily News*, i. 245, 281; ii. 56  
 D'Alembert's motto, i. 134  
 Davenport, Allan, the pale poet, ii.  
 263  
 Dawson, George, i. 48, 237  
 D'Azelio, Marquis, ii. 106  
 Dead agitators, ii. 48  
 Dean of Oriel, visit to the, ii. \*  
 Deedes the dull, i. 293  
 Delamotte, W. A., ii. 233  
 Delegate, the, an advocate, ii. 257  
 Democracy, the trouble of it, ii.  
 150  
 Dennison, Mr. Speaker, ii. 233  
 Derby, Lord, letter to, ii. 66, 188  
 De Rohan, Capt., ii. 103  
 Despair of Reform in 1824, i. 31  
 De Staël, Madame, i. 225  
 Deterring the inactive, i. 5  
 Detrosier, R., first preacher on  
 geology, i. 188  
 De Ville, M., i. 61  
 Devyr, T. Ainge, Irish prophet and  
 publicist, i. 107, 178  
 Dickens, C., his Inland Revenue  
 troubles, i. 283; protest against  
 the London Sunday, i. 285;  
 strange gift to Mazzini, ii. 236  
 Dickson, Major, M.P., i. 270

"Dictionary of National Biography," i. 101  
 Dilke, Sir Charles, ii. 302  
 Discussion, a guarantee of good faith, i. 144  
 Disraeli, his famous definition of News, i. 295; votes against freedom of knowledge, i. 296  
 Dixon, George, M.P., i. 197  
 Donaldson, Thomas, i. 209  
 D'Orsay, Count, i. 193  
 Doubleday's "Life of Peel," i. 220  
 Douglas, Robert Kelly, i. 30  
 Douglas, Frederick, i. 99  
 Drab fiend, a, i. 86, 89  
 Dress conflicts in English prisons, i. 167  
 Dudley, Lord, ii. 137, 140  
 Duffy, Sir C. Gavan, ii. 178  
 Duignan, W. H., i. 2; ii. 302  
 Dunckley, Dr., ii. 221

**EAGLE** Foundry, Birmingham, i. 11, 19  
 East, Rev. Timothy, i. 46, 47  
 Easthope, Sir John, i. 83  
 Eaton, Mr., ii. 179  
*Echo*, i. 270; ii. 183-4  
 Economy in salvation, i. 166  
*Edinburgh Review*, i. 129  
 Edmonds, George, i. 27, 31, 32  
 Edmondson, G., i. 202  
 Edmundson and King James, ii. 276  
 Edwards, Passmore, i. 279  
 Edwards, the spy of Fleet Street, ii. 2  
 Echo, Lord, testimony for, i. 267  
 Elements of Social Science, i. 126.  
 Eliot, George, i. 177, 199, 239; ii. 238  
 "Elizabeth," ii. 20  
 Elliott, Ebenezer, visit to him, i. 136; ii. 22, 222, 275  
 Ellis, William, i. 177; ii. 269  
 Ellis, Joseph, ii. 233  
*Empire*, ii. 173  
 Empson, Charles, ii. 13

Empress Eugenie alarmed at Brighton, ii. 213  
 "Encyclopædic Dictionary" (Cassell's), ii. 294  
 Enemies within the gate, i. 69  
 Enfantin, Père, ii. 5  
 Enfield, Lord, ii. 176  
*English Churchman's* testimony, i. 297  
*English Leader*, ii. 78  
 Enthusiasm, proportion in it, ii. 30  
 Equity Law Life Office, i. 152  
 Erskine, Mr. Justice, his descent and character, i. 92, 161  
 Esdras, the prophet, i. 81  
 Ethical Church, the first, i. 116  
 Evans, Sir de Lacy, i. 111  
 Ewen, Mr., an invention, ii. 3  
 Examiner of Plays, the, i. 238  
 Executions, public, the end of them, ii. 118  
*Express*, ii. 189  
 Eyre, Governor, i. 191; ii. 60

**FALIERO**, Marino, i. 51  
 Families in industrial cities, i. 129  
 Fatness a force in politics, ii. 9  
 Feist, Mr., ii. 109, 136  
 Ferrand, Busfield, i. 48  
 Fiddler, a night with a, i. 70  
 Fildes, Mrs., i. 130  
 Fines incurred, i. 288  
 Finlay, Thomas, i. 111  
 First letter to a newspaper, i. 73  
 Fleming, G. A., i. 142  
 Fleet Street House, its principles, ii. 163  
 Fletcher, Mr., ii. 69  
 Flinn dismissed, i. 246  
 Fonvielle, Ulric de, shot at by Prince Pierre Napoleon, i. 93; ii. 209; Wilfrid de, perturbs Napoleon in Brighton, i. 93; ii. 209; his letter to the British Association, ii. 214  
 Foote, G. W., defence of, i. 111, 269  
 Foreign mind, the uncertain, ii. 259

Forster, W. E., his singular conduct at Micheldever, ii. 121; feud with him for twenty years, ii. 125; his ambition, ii. 126; Nonconformist judgment of him, ii. 129; his distrust of his friends, ii. 131; his faithfulness in Ireland, ii. 131; generosity to an adversary, ii. 133

*Fortnightly Review*, ii. 218

Forum, the Fleet Street, alarms the French Government, ii. 61.

Forward, Stephen, ii. 137

Foster, Dr. Michael, i. 118

Foster, John, ii. 18

Fowler, John, i. 39, 136

Fox, C. J., ii. 281

Fox, George, ii. 285

Fox, W. J., on the platform, i. 39, 103, 243; ii. 227

Francis, John, his remarkable services, i. 291, 292

*Frazer's Magazine*, ii. 93

Freemasons' Hall, scene in, ii. 50

Free Trade, its results, ii. 229

Free Thought policy in the doc<sup>n</sup>, ii. 267

"French Colonels' Bill," the, night scenes on the defeat of, ii. 55

French Revolutionists but did as they had been done by, ii. 185

Frost, John, sword of, i. 104

Froude, J. A., his honourable fidelity, i. 194

Fry, Mr., an abstemionist without bigotry, i. 162

Fulton, Robert, i. 120

GALPIN, William, i. 202

Gambetta, Leon, i. 136

Garibaldi, ii. 17; telegram from the "Medina," ii. 120; an unrecorded outrage, ii. 120

Garibaldi, Menotti, at the House of Commons, ii. 123

Garlies, Lord, ii. 45

Garnett, Jeremiah, i. 130

Garrison, Lloyd, i. 98; ii. 70

Gawen, Admiral, ii. 13

Gentleman, signs of a, i. 118

George, Henry, i. 274-6; ii. 253

Georgi, the conspirator, ii. 33

Gibson, Thomas Milner, i. 281, 293; ii. 227, 268

Giffard, Sir Hardinge, on the term "Jingoies," i. 130; ii. 217

Gillespie, W. Honyman, i. 301

Gillybrand, Mrs., i. 22

Ginger's Hotel, ii. 19, 20, 72

Girard, Stephen, ii. 196

Gladstone, W. E., letter from, on recognition of the usurper, ii. 191; Mr. Byng's testimony, i. 284, 288; ii. 23, 54, 138, 145, 191, 276, 287, 303

Glaisher, ii. 209

Gloucester Gaol, i. 5

Goethe, ii. 302

"Go for Gold," i. 220

Godby, J. P., i. 290

Godin, St. Jean Baptiste, i. 4, 116

Godson, Mr., ii. 120, 121

Godwin, William, i. 216

Goldsmid, Sir Isaac Lyon, i. 201

Gordon, Lindsay, i. 227

Goulburn, Dean, ii. 101, 199; radiant and unpleasant, ii. 200

Graham, Sir James, last days of, i. 153, 169, 174

Granville, Earl, ii. 193

Greaves, John Pierrepont, i. 162

Greeley, Horace, i. 178, 293

Green, John, i. 72

Green, J. R., ii. 303

Greg, Percy, i. 82; ii. 67

Greg, W. Rathbone, ii. 269

Grey, Lord, i. 223

Griffith, Mr., ii. 214

Griffiths, Rev. Dr., his mistake, ii. 211

Grote, George, i. 216; ii. 180

Groves, Richard, i. 8

Groves, Catherine, i. 19

Guerzoni, ii. 123

Guizot in England, i. 19, 198

Gwynne, "Aliquis," i. 301

HALLETT, Alderman, W. H., ii. 272

Hamilton, John, ii. 240

Hansom, Mr., Socialist Architect, i. 202

Harcourt, Sir W. V., i. 269

Hardy, Gathorne, ii. 197

Harney, George Julian, i. 84, 106, 148; ii. 252

Harris, Mr., i. 14

Harvey, Daniel Whittle, ii. 134

Haslam, J. C., ii. 265

Hawkes, Timothy, the Methodist, i. 21

Hawkes, William, i. 21, 22

Hawkins, Dr. Blissett, i. 171-2

Hawksford, Mr., i. 16

Hayward, A., i. 129

Hazlitt, W., ii. 241

Healey, Alderman, ii. 49

Hebrew melodies in Cromer, ii. 144

Heenan's mode of fighting, ii. 111

Heinzen, the Russian agitator, i. 95

Herbert, George, i. 6

Herbert, Sydney, ii. 98

Herbert, Hon. A., ii. 216

Herwegh, Madame, ii. 29

Herzel, Rudolph, i. 113

Herzen, Alexander, Editor of the *Kolokol*, i. 94

Hetherington, Henry, Editor of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, i. 47, 102, 112, 264, 275, 277

Heywood, Abel, i. 102, 277

Hibbert, Julian, ii. 161, 165, 186

Hickson, W. E., i. 291

Hill, Sir Rowland, i. 183

Hinton, Col. F. H., i. 98

Hinton, Rev. Howard, i. 256

Hinton, James, i. 256

Hoggins, Mr., Q.C., i. 290

Holbein, Hans, ii. 234-6

Holbery, Chartist prisoner, i. 171

Holcroft, Thomas, his philosophical foresight, i. 116; the precursor of Robert Owen, i. 117

Holdreth, Lionel H., ii. 67

Holker, Sir John, ii. 154

Holland, H. T., ii. 177

Hollick, Dr. F., i. 60, 65

Holmes, Dr. O. W., ii. 299

Holyoake, Austin, i. 266; ii. 153, 160

Holyoake, Jacob, i. 7

Holyoake, Mrs., i. 80, 147

Holyoake, William, i. 235

Home Secretaries, imprisonment of, i. 174

Hooker, Bishop, i. 212; ii. 46

Hooper, Bishop, unforeseen coincidences, i. 211

Hooper, George, i. 232, 238; ii. 243

Hope, Beresford, ii. 282

Horn button days in Birmingham, i. 10

Hotten, Camden, ii. 280

Houghton, Lord, ii. 11, 192, 261; letters from, ii. 15, 16

Howell, George, M.P., ii. 187, 194

Howie, James, ii. 222

Howitt, William, ii. 3

Huc and Gabet's Travels, ii. 91

Hughan, James, i. 246

Hughes, Judge, ii. 303

Hughes, Rev. Hugh Price, ii. 294

Hugo, Victor, ii. 261

Humiliation days, danger of them, ii. 164

Hume, Joseph, M.P., i. 221

Hunt, Leigh, not "Harold Skimpole," i. 100, 233; his honourable regard for Lord John Russell, i. 234, 275

Hunt, Orator, ii. 159

Hunt, Thornton, the journalist, i. 186, 226, 227; his mistake concerning Cobden, i. 229; sagacious idea of Napoleon III., i. 231; ii. 279

Hunt, Seth, i. 98

Hunt, Knight, i. 157

Hutton, Rev. H., i. 30

Huxley, T. H., i. 130; ii. 303

Hyde Park, expected conflict there, ii. 186

ICK, Dr., curator, i. 66  
 Ignorance, the abjectness of it, i. 163  
 Imprisonment for opinion brutalised, i. 164  
 Individualist policy, i. 4  
 Infernal machines, their English origin, ii. 19  
 Inge family, the, i. 15  
 Ingersoll, Col. R. G., i. 2, 99  
 Inland Revenue Board, i. 277; the Revenue Board War, i. 286; Inland Revenue cry, "Stop or Stamp," i. 288  
 Inn-keeper, a deceitful Matlock, i. 70  
 Ion's degeneracy, i. 267  
 Irish Question, the, in the "Bull Ring," i. 84  
*Irish World*, ii. 218

JACOB, meaning of the name, i. 18  
 Jacobs, Mr., i. 134  
 Jail Square, Glasgow, education in, ii. 116  
 Jambelli, Frederick, ii. 19  
 James, Edwin, his Mirabeauan oration, ii. 32, 34  
 James, Rev. John Angell, i. 13, 33, 254, 256  
 James, King, ii. 276  
 Jardine, Mr., lowers the repute of English justice, ii. 65  
 Jelf, Rev. Dr., his wonderful syllogism, i. 241; ii. 60  
 Jenkinson's, Mr., ii. 77  
 Jerrold, Douglas, i. 292; ii. 3, 116  
 Jewish rights defended, ii. 44  
 Jingoes, origin of the term, i. 217  
 Johnson, J. G., his wise suggestion, ii. 296  
 Jones, Lloyd, i. 131, 141, 184; ii. 194  
 Jones, Rev. S., i. 149, 166  
 Jones, Ernest, his march through the Black Forest, ii. 248; his vicissitudes and integrity, ii. 249; his courage in prison, ii. 250; as an orator, ii. 253; his poetic force, ii. 253

Jones, Atherley, M.P., ii. 248  
 Jones, Major, ii. 248  
 Jones, Mrs. Ernest, ii. 251  
 Jonson, Ben, ii. 286  
 Judge, the, a delegate, ii. 256  
 Just, St., saying of, i. 93

KELLY, Sir Fitzroy, ii. 32  
 Kemp, William, ii. 145  
 Kent, Duke of, i. 270  
 Kentish, Rev. Mr., i. 48  
 Kenrick, Rev. Mr., ii. 71  
 Ketch, Jack, as an official teacher, ii. 115  
 Key, Prof. J. H., i. 279  
 Killed by a letter, i. 55  
 Kimberley, Lord, ii. 176-7  
 King, Tom, ii. 108  
 King, Katie, i. 124  
 Kingsley, Canon, his strange accusation, i. 241; ii. 60  
 King and Heenan, a night ride to the fight, ii. 109  
 Kneller, Sir Godfrey, ii. 117  
 Knight, Charles, i. 244  
 Knowles, James, i. 2  
 Kossuth, Lajos, his inflexibility, i. 96; his distinction as an orator, ii. 13, 258; his definition of a democracy, ii. 165, 259  
 Krapotkin, Prince, i. 95  
 Kydd, Samuel, i. 121  
 Kynersley, Mr., ii. 230

LADY tyrannicides, ii. 62; a suspicious, ii. 153  
 Lamb, Charles, i. 228; ii. 246  
 Lambeth Garden, a night in a, i. 154  
 Landor, Walter Savage, his offer, 101; letters to the author, ii. 11-14; his defence, ii. 11; on controversialists, ii. 15; sonnet to Garibaldi, ii. 17; his epitaph, ii. 18; reply from the "Den," ii. 56  
 Lane, Hammer, ii. 114  
 Langford, Dr. J. A., i. 47, 292  
 Langley, Dr. J. Baxter, i. 112

Larken, Rev. E. R., first clergyman who wore a beard, i. 237

Lawrence, Mr., the famous surgeon, i. 189

Lawson, Sir Wilfrid, i. 174, 276; ii. 145, 176

Lawson, Sir Edward, i. 231

Leader, the, its origin and principles, i. 142, 185, 236, 285

Leaping with a coffin, i. 73

Le Blond, Robert, i. 299

Lecount's, Lieut., "Hunt after the Devil," i. 47; ii. 89

Leland, Mr., his judicious advice, ii. 219

Lennon, a sea rover, i. 248

Lennox, Lord H., ii. 197

Letter, the, when dead the creed is dead, i. 261

Lewes, G. H., his intellectual intrepidity, i. 186, 238, 243

Lewes, Mrs., i. 239

Lewis, Sir George Cornwall, i. 295

Limelight, the, on the Clock Tower, ii. 147

Linton, W. J., his speech at the Whittington Club, i. 58, 98, 238; ii. 161

*Liverpool Daily Post*, i. 240

Livesey, Alderman, ii. 54

Livesey, Joseph, "T-t-totaller," i. 272

Lloyd, Edward, publisher, i. 287

Lloyd, Mr., banker, i. 24

Logan, William, missionary, i. 263

Logic of magistrates, i. 173

London, proposal to blow it up, London, first lecture in, i. 155

Lonsdale's, Lord, colliers, i. 247

Lords of the Treasury deny and admit, i. 297

L'Overture Toussaint, i. 98

Lovett, William, the prisoner of Warwick Gaol, i. 103, 177; ii. 269

Lowe, Mr., Dr. Johnson's friend, ii. 241

Lucas, Samuel, i. 294; ii. 278

Luton banquet oratory, ii. 158

Lyttelton, Lord, ii. 283

Lyall, Sir A. C., ii. 100

Lyndhurst, Lord, abrogates a law, i. 277

Lying, the, of the law, i. 151

Lyton, Sir Bulwer, i. 37, 295; his fine speech on Steele, i. 295

McCARTHY, Justin, record in "Our Own Times," ii., 126, 217

Macaulay, Lord, i. 233

Maccall, William, ii. 165

M'Donnell, Rev. T. M., i. 30

Macfarlane, Hans Smith, ii. 116

McGuffog, Mr., i. 117

Magee, Bishop, in the pulpit, ii. 199

Mahomet, his wisdom, i. 140

Malmesbury, Earl of, i. 214

Malthus, the anti-populationist, i. 129-30

Man, each a reflex of all, ii. 302

*Manchester Examiner*, ii. 222

*Manchester Guardian*, i. 129

Mandeville, Mr., i. 173

Manners, Lord John, ii. 147, 157, 187

Mansel, Dr., i. 16

Mantle, G. J., 104, 105

*Manx Herald*, i. 73

Mario, Madame Jesie M. W., i. 100

Mario, Alberto, i. 90

Marriott, Rev. C., Dean of Oriel, ii. 6

Marsden, M. Eagles, i. 292

Marston, J. W., i. 164

Marston's question, i. 164

Martin, Mrs. Emma, i. 110, 122

Martin, Rev. Samuel, ii. 71

Martineau, Harriet, i. 78, 79, 98; ii. 128, 303

Martyrdom, mistakes about it, i. 152; the Faliero side of, i. 51

Marvell, Mr., the banker, ii. 102

Marx, Karl, ii. 253, 263

Mason, Captain, i. 153, 161, 162, 169, 171

Mason, Sir Josiah, his thought for children, ii. 296; leaves no dead hand on his gifts, ii. 297; the Queen's consideration for him, ii. 298

Massey, Mrs., i. 15

Matchboxes in pre-Lucifer days, i. 8

Matthews, i. 84

Matzys, Quentin, ii. 264

Maurice, Rev. F. D., his strange report, i. 241; his Socialistic policy, i. 79; ii. 127, 128

Mayall, J. E., ii. 213

Mayer, i. 183

Mayhew, Horace, ii. 261

Mayne, Sir Richard, i. 135; ii. 52, 56, 62

Mayor of Buckingham, ii. 205

Mazzini, Guiseppe, i. 90, 91, 94, 137; his generous risks, ii. 39; letter from, ii. 123, 160; bust of, ii. 165

Mechanics, their condition sixty years ago, i. 22, 23

Menken, Ada Isaacs, ii. 113

*Melbourne Argus*, ii. 173

Melbourne, the let-alone Lord, ii. 78

Merritt, Henry, his early days, ii. 232; writes in the *Leader*, ii. 237; his conscientiousness, ii. 235; his first book, i. 236; letter from Ruskin to him, i. 243; strange memoirs of him, ii. 244, 292

Miali, Edward, i. 295

Midland mind, the, i. 35, 42

Mill, J. S., i. 29, 105, 120, 128-130; his perilous sympathy, ii. 43, 180; night with him at the Agricultural Hall meeting, ii. 189; his praise of his wife, i. 76

Mill, James, i. 128

Milnes, Monckton, M.P., ii. 12

Milton half right, i. 254

Mitchell Hey Mill, the, ii. 289

Molesworth, Rev. Dr., of Rochdale, ii. 294

Molesworth, Sir Wm., ii. 221

Moody, Mr., ii. 154

Moore, R. R. R., ii. 228

Moore, Richard, his imitable career, ii. 268

Moorson, Constantine, i. 46

Mordan, i. 187

Morley, S., a philanthropist who gave while it was day, i. 112, 157-159, 257

*Morning Advertiser*, i. 49

*Morning Chronicle*, the malignant, ii. 2

*Morning Post*, i. 281

*Morning Star*, i. 229; ii. 73, 108, 120

Morris, John, i. 183

Morrison, James, i. 72

Morrison, Davidson, ii. 253

Morrison, Walter, ii. 303

Moslem workman, the, who died with his face to Mecca, ii. 278

Mott, Lucretia, her maxim, i. 183

Müller, Franz, ii. 116

Muntz, G. F., i. 28, 30, 36, 48

Muntz, P. H., i. 28

Murder for applause, ii. 138

Murderer, dangerous advice to a, ii. 138, 140; a letter from a, ii. 139

Murphy, John Lowther, i. 62, 134

Murray's, Dr., Oxford Dictionary ii. 294

My Lords, i. 290

Mystery, the white, i. 140

NADAUD, Martin, workman, i. 94

Napier, Sir Charles, i. 84

Napier, Sir William, ii. 13

Napoleon I., i. 120; Napoleon III., ii. 8; doctrine of despotism, ii. 63; peace of, ii. 67; his alarm in Fleet Street, ii. 136

Napoleon, Empress, ii. 213

Napoleon, Prince Pierre, i. 93; ii. 209

*Natal Mercury*, ii. 84

*National Reformer*, i. 278

Neale, Edward Vansittart, ii. 6

Nearly strangled, i. 24  
 Negretti, Signor, ii. 123  
*Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, i. 179; ii. 112, 123, 108, 120, 280  
*Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, i. 262  
 Newell, Rev. Dr., i. 149  
*New York Herald*, ii. 196  
*New York Tribune*, i. 177, 295; ii. 170, 280  
 Newhall Hill, the song of the Unions, i. 30  
 Newman, F. W., i. 97, 126, 229; ii. 64, 94, 165, 293, 303  
*New Moral World*, i. 72, 142  
 Newspaper inventions, ii. 2, 3  
 Newsvendor's terror, i. 287, 289  
*New York Herald*, ii. 196  
 Nightingale, Miss, i. 100  
*Nineteenth Century*, ii. 46  
 Noble democrats, ii. 197; how their names were discovered, ii. 196; the planks of their platform, ii. 192  
 Normanby, Lord, ii. 191  
 Northcote, Sir Stafford, ii. 197  
*Northern Liberator*, i. 107  
 Norwich, singular address to political women in, 1833, i. 29  
 Nosa Danus, ii. 36  
 Novello, Alfred, ii. 268

OASTLER, Richard, i. 104-7  
 Oathlessness, sole instance of, ii. 255  
 O'Brien, Bronterre, i. 107; ii. 267  
 O'Brien, William, M.P., i. 86, 173  
 O'Connell, Daniel, i. 36, 37; ii. 230  
 O'Connor, Feargus, i. 106  
 O'Connell on Lord Russell, i. 234  
 O'Connor's first madness, i. 227  
 O'Connor, Miss, ii. 60  
 Oddfellows' Lectures, old and new, i. 205-207; ii. 202  
 Oddfellows, honest, i. 207  
 Odgers, George, ii. 3  
 Ogden of Gloucester, i. 157  
 Oliphant, Mrs., i. 124  
 Opinions, taste in, ii. 303

*Oracle of Reason*, i. 110; its defiant motto, i. 142, 160  
 Orator, characteristics of the, i. 136  
 Orsini, visit from him, i. 94; ii. 26; answered the question of Cato, ii. 27; vindicated against the Emperor, ii. 28  
 Osborne, Bernal, M.P., ii. 53  
 Ossoli, Countess, i. 244  
 Otone the Great, ii. 36  
 Otway, Sir Arthur, M.P., ii. 169, 171  
 Owen, Robert, i. 4, 40, 48, 94, 102, 115; his fine temper owing to his principles, i. 118; letter from, i. 122; his political programme, i. 123; ii. 165, 267, 273  
 Owen, R. Dale, i. 112; his scrupulous honour, i. 124  
 Oxford, Bishop of, i. 210

PADMORE, Sally, i. 16  
 Pailleron, M., i. 93  
 Pakington, Sir John, ii. 197  
 Paley, Dr., i. 65  
 Palmerston, Lord, message from, i. 228; disliked by most tyrants, ii. 76; a Committee to behead him, ii. 77; betrayed by his friends in Bradford, ii. 79; received by a voiceless crowd, ii. 80; his generosity to Miss O'Connor, ii. 80; his friendliness to the author, ii. 81, 279  
 Paine, Thomas, i. 115; the Fleet Street statue of, ii. 2  
 Pare, William, i. 40, 41, 77, 141  
 Parker, Rev. Joseph, D.D., ii. 303  
 Parkes, Josiah, i. 85  
 Parkes, T., i. 121  
 Parrington, Mr., ii. 234  
 Parry, i. 292  
 Parry, Serj. John Humphry, i. 155, 156, 177  
 Pascal, Blaise, ii. 301  
 Paterson, i. 111, 135  
 Paterson, Thomas, i. 111, 135  
 Partnership in industry, ii. 162

Paulton, Mr., and Place, ii. 219, 221, 226  
 Peace of 1856, ii. 164  
 Peel, Sir Robert, i. 46; ii. 54, 225, 228  
 Peltier's case, ii. 33  
 Pel Verjuice, i. 38  
 Pemberton, Charles Reece, i. 37-39, 85, 132, 221  
 Pemberton, William, i. 85, 132  
 Penalties of opinion, i. 177-181  
 Penn and Charles II., ii. 276  
*People's Review*, i. 58  
 People who know everything, i. 138  
 Perry, Sir Erskine, ii. 44  
 Perry of the *Morning Chronicle*, ii. 236  
 Persistence, policy of, i. 176  
 Peterborough, Bishop of, ii. 199, 293  
 Pettitt, Stephen, ii. 240  
 Philippe, Louis, at Farnborough Station, i. 197, 198  
 Phillips, Wendell, meets Bright's son in State Street, i. 137, 238; ii. 286  
 Philpotts, Bishop, i. 109, 141  
 Phinn, Q.C., M.P., i. 290; ii. 12  
 Pierri entangled, i. 307; ii. 30  
 Pietri, M., the newspaper's agent, ii. 29  
 Pitman, Isaac, i. 24  
 Pitt, W., ii. 281  
 Place, Francis, the Radical tailor of Charing Cross, i. 5, 85, 120, 177; his interview with the Duke of Wellington, i. 218; his letter to the author, i. 217; his walks with Jeremy Bentham, i. 215, 222, 265  
 Plank bed, a, i. 149  
 Police audience, a, i. 148  
 Police plots, ii. 54  
 Political predictions in 1868, ii. 150  
 Pooley, Thomas, his trial, i. 111; ii. 94  
 "Poor" Holbery, i. 171, 172  
 Porson on the methods of Pitt and Fox, ii. 281  
 Postmaster of Cheltenham, i. 169  
 Potter, George, ii. 194  
 Potter, Stuart, local preacher, i. 250  
 Potter, T. Bayley, M.P., ii. 188, 230  
 Praed, Landor, i. 266  
 Prentice, Archibald, ii. 221  
 Prince Consort, i. 270  
 Prison theology, i. 167  
 Prize Ring, "nurse" defined, ii. 109  
 Propagandism not a trade, ii. 162  
 Prospero's question, i. 19  
 Protectionists, their terrible predictions, ii. 224, 225  
 "Publicola" of the *Weekly Dispatch*, i. 153  
 Pulzsky, Francis, i. 97  
 Pulzsky, Madame, i. 97; her despair of clemency, ii. 62  
*Punch*, i. 281; ii. 77  
 Purchasing power, a new phrase in 1869, ii. 176  
 P. Y., Dr., i. 47  
 Pyat, Felix, i. 74, 94; ii. 64  
*Quarterly Review*, its nameless authors, i. 180  
 Queen, Her Majesty the, her remonstrance to Palmerston, ii. 134, 136, 192; in Prince Albert's days, i. 198; visits Napoleon III., i. 134; Anne, her infamous act, put to death, i. 294; ii. 192, 283  
 Queensberry, Duke of, i. 35  
 Queenwood Hall, its building and fate, i. 201, 202  
 Querulous Radicals, i. 32  
 Questions, law of irrelevant, i. 142  
 Quincy, Josiah, i. 97  
 RACE, the instincts of, i. 34  
 Radical Tailor of Charing Cross, the, i. 218  
 Ramsay, Mr., i. 112, 269  
 Reader, the, ii. 242  
 Reasoner, the, ii. 89, 173; advised by the Postmaster to make a false declaration, i. 391

Reclus, Elisée, and Elie, i. 94  
 Red and Co., the, explained, ii. 32  
 Red Republican, i. 106  
 Reed, R. B., i. 2  
 Reid, Wemyss, ii. 128  
 Reign of Terror questions, i. 263  
 Reporters, reversible, ii. 156  
 Representation, working-class, defended, ii. 151  
 Retford, Rev. Dr., i. 245  
 Revolutionary placards in London, ii. 51-54  
*Reynolds' Newspaper*, ii. 50  
 Rice, Mr. Spring, i. 171  
 Richard II. in the Jerusalem Chamber, ii. 233  
 Richards, Colonel A. B., ii. 49  
 Richmond, Duke of, ii. 197  
 Rintoul's religion, i. 228-9  
 Ripley, the obtuse, ii. 78  
 Roalfe, Matilda, i. 110  
 Roberts, Mr., glass grinder, i. 16  
 Roberts, Wm. Prouting, i. 105  
 Robespierre, M., i. 137  
 Robinson, Henry, of Edinburgh, i. 111  
 Rodgers, Paul, i. 136  
 Roebuck, J. A., i. 129, 130, 154  
 Rogers, J., ii. 176  
 Rogers, Professor T. E. Thorold, i. 6  
 Rollin, Ledru, condemned for a title, i. 92; ii. 165, 262  
 Rothschild House, the, ii. 44  
 Routledge, E., ii. 26  
 Royal Academy, a, Boswell, ii. 241  
 Royal Family always friendly to co-operation, i. 270  
 Royston, Viscount, ii. 45  
 Rudio, Carlo de, i. 93; his suspicious speeches, ii. 33, 37; letter from him, ii. 37-8  
 Ruge, Dr. Arnold, i. 95  
 Rushton, Benj., of Ovenden, ii. 252  
 Ruskin, John, his Colenso diamond, i. 91, 34; ii. 243  
 Russell, Mr., the Song seller, i. 32  
 Russell, Lord John, his reply to Bala- lantyne, i. 234, 275; ii. 138, 192  
 Russell, Scott, adventures in political seas, ii. 194, 195  
 Rutherford, Rev. Dr., i. 263  
 Rutland, Duke of, ii. 146  
 Ryall, Maltus Questell, i. 142  
 Ryder, Robert, Bishop Colenso's builder, ii. 86-88  
 Ryland, Arthur, i. 32  
 SAFFI, Aurelio, i. 91, 284  
 St. Simonians, ii. 5  
*St. James's Gazette*, i. 238  
 Salisbury, Lord, i. 86, 273  
 Salt, Thomas Clutton, i. 29, 45, 103  
 Sampson, Phil, ii. 114  
 Sargent's Life of Owen, i. 131  
 Sayer, Hon. Andrew, i. 166  
 Sayers, Tom, an artist in the Ring, ii. 108, 113  
 Scarlett, Rev., i. 12  
 Schnadhorst, Mr., i. 14  
 Schœlcher, Victor, i. 93  
 Schofield, William, M.P., his services to industry, ii. 162, 163  
 Scholefield, Joshua, i. 27, 31  
 Scott, Thomas, baffles the Bishop of Peterborough, ii. 83; his pamphlet manufactory, ii. 84  
 Scott, Mrs., ii. 83  
 Scott, Thomas B., Bombardier, ii. 97  
 Search, Edward, i. 98, 132  
 Secularism, the ethics of this life, ii. 292; founded on human considerations only, ii. 292; entirely different from Atheism, ii. 294  
 Seeley, Charles, letter to him, ii. 119, 124  
 Searle, January, i. 192  
 Sensationalism, effects of, i. 300  
 Serle, "Caustic," i. 179  
 Shaen, William, i. 183; ii. 49  
 Shaftesbury, Earl of, ii. 123  
 Sharman, Rev. William, i. 12  
 Shaw, the Waterloo boxer, ii. 114  
 Shelley, Sir John, i. 293; ii. 48

Sherbrooke, Lord, ii. 256  
 Shiel, Lalor, i. 136  
 Shillitoe and the Czar, ii. 276  
 Shiloh's silver cradle, i. 27  
 Shorter, Thomas, traduced, ii. 3  
 Shorthouse, Dr., ii. 109, 113  
 Simplicity, the, of morality, i. 139  
 Sinclair, Sir John, M.P., ii. 109  
 Skelton, Dr., ii. 252  
 Skimpole, Harold, the theory of, ii. 233  
 Slack, H. J., i. 101, 275  
 Sleigh, Mr., ii. 65  
 Smalley, G. W., i. 170, ii. 259  
 Smith, W. B., Grandmaster, ii. 202  
 Smith, Hawkes, i. 45, 47-49, 60, 62; ii. 203  
 Smith, Toulmin, i. 97  
 Smith, Joseph, of Wissahickon, i. 72  
 Smith, Samuel, i. 21  
 Smith, Sydney, i. 7; ii. 182  
 Smith, J. B., ii. 223  
 Smith, John Stores, i. 234  
 Smith, George Paton, ii. 174  
 "Social Missionary," origin of, i. 135  
 Sojourner Truth, her discernment, i. 137  
 Southcote, Joanna, i. 27  
 Southey, Robert, i. 112  
 Southey, Ernest W., i. 112; ii. 137  
 Southwell, Charles, i. 109, 142; ii. 162  
 Speaking out, Traitorous, advisers of, ii. 3  
*Spectator*, the, i. 228; its service to the unfriended, ii. 95; in the days of Rintoul, i. 228, 229; Steele's killed by Queen Anne, i. 274  
 Spencer, Herbert, i. 142, 243; undervalues Parliament, ii. 240, 256, 263  
 Spencer, Rev. Thomas, M.A., i. 291  
 Spensley, Rev. Calvert, ii. 88  
 Sperry, the Cheltenham poet, i. 143  
 Spies silent under the dagger, ii. 41  
*Spirit of the Age*, i. 183, 184  
 Spurgeon, Rev. C. H., i. 69  
 Spy, the life of a, ii. 1  
 Staël, Madame de, ii. 171  
*Standard*, the, ii. 118, 124, 240  
 Stanley, Dean, ii. 233  
 Stansfeld, James, resents the Micheldever affair, i. 24, 236, 292; ii. 124, 268  
 State Colonies, demand for, ii. 44  
 Steele, Sir Richard, i. 274  
 Stephens, Rev. J. Rayner, i. 104; ii. 258  
 Stephenson, George, i. 24  
 Sterling, John, i. 5  
 Storr, J. Stephens, ii. 303  
 Supple, Gerald, shoots the wrong person, ii. 174; did not object to be hanged, ii. 174; affidavit on his behalf, ii. 175; saved by Lord Kimberley's kindness, ii. 176; letter from Mr. Supple, ii. 177  
 Sutherland, ii. 121  
 Sutherland, Duke of, ii. 119  
 Swinbourne, the Actor, i. 137  
 Swindlehurst, Mr., i. 112  
 Syme, Rev. Alexander, i. 258  
 Syme, Rev. Ebenezer, i. 250, 258; ii. 173, 177  
 TALFOURD, Serjeant, i. 2, 38; ii. 265  
 Tallandier, A., French exile, ii. 66  
 Talleyrand, Prince, i. 137; ii. 76  
 "Taxes on knowledge," origin of the phrase, i. 294  
 Taylor, John Edward, i. 129  
 Taylor, P. A., i. 293; ii. 42  
 Taylor, Sir Henry, i. 5  
 Tchorzewski, Stanislaus, the Pole, ii. 64  
 Teetotalism, its merciful side, i. 271  
*Telegraph, Daily*, i. 227; on Radio ii. 36, 121  
 Temple, Dr., ii. 116  
 Tennyson, Lord, ii. 289  
 Theology always in power, i. 181  
 Threstlecock, Mr., i. 23  
 Thiers, Adolphe, saying of, ii. 68, 227, 260

Thomas, Mr. Serjeant, i. 158  
 Thomasson, Thomas, ii. 221, 222; ii. 280  
 Thompson, General Perronet, i. 158; ii. 222  
 Thompson, George, i. 31, 98  
 Thompson, "Contrition," i. 158  
*Times, The*, i. 220; testimony of, ii. 34, 117, 148  
 Timm, Mr., his difficulties, i. 282  
 Timmins, Sam, i. 2, 37, 281-2  
 Titan fight at Wadhurst, ii. 113  
 Tithes paid in kind, i. 253  
 Titus, Silas, the Royalist assassin, ii. 60  
 Tolerant ambition explained, ii. 301  
 Tory alliance, what it means, ii. 197  
 Tory Radicalism defined, ii. 256  
 Towell, the murderer, ii. 32  
 Townley, Rev. H., i. 259  
 Trades Unionist editor, i. 72  
 Trafalgar Square policy, i. 84; ii. 186  
 Tragedies, undesigned, i. 52  
 Treasurer of Garibaldi, an opinionative, ii. 102; conceals a forgery, ii. 103; letters to him, ii. 104  
 Trelawny, Sir J., his midnight record of Parliament, ii. 159  
 Trevelyan, Arthur, i. 302, 303, 304  
 Trevelyan, G. O., his courage of duty, ii. 125  
 Trevelyan, Sir W., i. 304  
 Tropmann, ii. 138  
 Trouble with the chaplain, i. 167; with the oath, i. 153  
 Truelove, Edward, i. 112; ii. 68  
 Tucker, Mr., ii. 259  
 Turgot, M., ii. 192  
 Turner, George, i. 120, 284  
 Twamley, Miss L. Anne, i. 66  
 Tyndall, Prof. John, i. 202; ii. 58, 303  
 Type, the deadliest form of lead, i. 273  
 Tyrannicide, Landor's defence of it, i. 101; a doctrine of rulers and ruled, ii. 60; conditions of, ii. 60, 61  
 Tyranny defined, ii. 59  
 UNITARIAN honour, ii. 70  
 Uriel, the angel, i. 81  
 Urquhart, David, ii. 76  
 Useful knowledge, new knowledge, i. 40  
 Usurper, the, his legend at Bordeaux, i. 215  
 VALLANCE, Mr., i. 63  
 Valpy, Mr., at Cromer, ii. 145  
 Venturi, Madame, her portrait of Ledru Rollin, ii. 261  
 Village school, a, in Gawcott, ii. 204  
 Villages of co-operation, when first named, i. 27  
 Villiers, C. P., M.P., ii. 223  
 Vincent, H., i. 102, 104  
 Visit from Orsini, ii. 26  
 Voluntary education mendicant in quality, ii. 150.

WADDINGTON, H., ii. 74  
 Wages raised by workmanship, i. 23  
 Wainwright, the Whitechapel murderer, ii. 153  
 Wales, Prince of, ii. 78; telegram to him, ii. 112  
 Walewski, Count, ii. 48, 192  
 Walker, Mr., ii. 197  
 Walking public-house, a, i. 305  
 Wall, post-office thief, i. 169  
 Wallace, A. R., ii. 218  
 Walpole, Mr. Secretary, negotiation with, ii. 73; his generous letter, ii. 74; his fairness and firmness, ii. 186; his statement in Parliament, ii. 188; letter from him, ii. 190  
 Walshe, John, marked for death, ii. 174  
 Walter, Mr., non-existent, ii. 3  
 War, a political policy, i. 230  
 War Chronicles, the, i. 285  
 War Chronicle campaign, i. 286

Ward, Mr., the convert, ii. 7  
 Warden the Chartist, ii. 77  
 Warren, Sir Charles, i. 84  
 Watson, James, Radical publisher,  
     i. 102, 112; ii. 161, 267  
 Watts, Dr. John, i. 293  
 Wayside nights, i. 71  
 Wayside days, i. 71, 72, 75  
*Weekly Dispatch*, i. 153, 179  
 Weir, Wm., ii. 222  
 Weitling, Wilhelm, the German  
     Communist, 95, 96, 137  
 Wellington, Duke of, without sym-  
     pathy for his soldiers, i. 213; his  
     singular credulity, i. 214; leads  
     an attack on Carlile, ii. 160, 289  
 Welshmen, their peculiarity in argu-  
     ment, i. 119  
 West, Mrs., ii. 13  
*Westminster Review*, ii. 28  
 Weston, John, the thin patriot, ii.  
     263  
 Wetherall, Sir C., i. 109  
 What ailed him, ii. 107  
 White, William, i. 1; ii. 168  
 White, George, English in name,  
     Irish in danger, i. 104, 107  
 White, Rev. Mr., ii. 268  
 Whitehaven platform, fortifications  
     in, i. 249  
*Whitehaven Herald*, i. 249  
 Whitehead, Rev. M., ii. 204  
 Whittier, J. G., ii. 183  
 Whitty, Ed., his historic phrase, i.  
     240  
 Wicks, Rev. Mr., i. 246  
 Widow Ryan, the, ii. 150  
 Wilberforce, Bishop, his candour, ii.  
     202; letters to him, ii. 204-6; his  
     courage and kindness to Gawcott  
     children, ii. 207; letter to *The  
     Times* in his honour, ii. 208  
 Wilderspin, S., i. 291  
 Wild words, cost of, i. 299  
 Wilks, Washington, his manli-  
     i. 266; ii. 108, 122  
 Williams, | Alderman James,  
     Sunderland, i. 106  
 Williams, Capt., i. 153-4  
 Williams, E. J., ii. 175  
 Wilmot, Sir Eardley, i. 231  
 Wilson, George, the great cl-  
     man, ii. 226-9  
 Wilson, Benj., of Salterhebble  
     251  
 Wise tailors, i. 74  
 Wollstonecraft, M., i. 225  
 Woolf, Major, ii. 8, 123  
 Woolner, Thomas, ii. 142  
 Wolseley, Sir Charles, Bart., M  
     for Birmingham, i. 31  
 Wolseley, Lord, i. 213  
 Woman's, a, mind, i. 78; fight  
     in Birmingham, ii. 114  
*Woman's Journal*, a, i. 224-5  
 Women, origin of their agitation  
     civil rights, i. 223-5; platf-  
     speakers, the first, i. 222  
 Wooler, Jonathan, i. 4, 31, 129  
 Words, peril of, i. 265, 266  
 Wordsworth, W., i. 139  
 Workman who dressed well,  
     22  
 Workshop life, its advantages  
     25  
*World*, the, ii., 218  
 Wright, Daniel, i. 14, 45, 46  
 Writing in the dark, i. 174

YARBOROUGH, Lord, ii. 35  
 Youll, Mr., ii. 3  
 Young, Anthony, i. 137



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